
Imprimatur

Sept. 18.
1667.

Hic Liber cui titulus, *A Discourse concerning the Judgments of God, &c.*

Tho. Cook R^{mo} in Christo
Patri & D^{no} D. Gilberto
Archiepisc. Cant. à Sa-
cris Domest.

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G. 14. 51
A
DISCOURSE
OF THE
Judgments
OF
G O D.

Composed for the
Present Times,
Against
Atheism and Prophaneness.

Thy Judgments, O Lord, are a great Deep.

L O N D O N,
Printed by J. M. for Henry Herringman at the
Sign of the Blew Anchor in the Lower
Walk of the New Exchange. 1668.

DIS COURSE
 OF THE
 Judgments



367:04

LONDON:
 Printed by M. W. B. for the Author and
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 West's Church Lane. 1763.

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To the Right Honourable
S^r *William Peak*, Lord Mayor
of the City of *London* ; To the
Honourable Court of Alder-
men there : And in them to that
whole City.

Right Honourable,

THis Discourse humbly
dedicates it self to you,
having received Being
from the Contempla-
tion of those late Monuments of
Divine Displeasure , raised upon
this Nation in General , and more
directly over you. If you vouch-
safe it Acceptance and Patro-
nage, you give it the advantage
of that Hill , upon which so Fa-

The Dedication.

mous a City is set, that it may not be hid in its own obscurity. But as the great Tapers of Judgment, upon which it gazes, were thought fit to be exalted into so lofty a Candlestick; which in lower places had been as under a Bed or Bushel: So these Observations that would shine by their Beams, will be most happily fixed there, if it may be with your Favour and Allowance.

There is nothing herein to plead so great a dignation from you, but,

First, an humble zeal to Divine Glory, the Counsel of which Atheism darkens by words without knowledge; while it would set up petty Mechanicks of Evil at work in their dark shops, instead of
of

The Dedication.

of that Almighty Hand, reaching down out of its own Heaven into this lower World, its own also: and in the room of that Jehovah, who knows no other besides himself in Heaven or Earth; or any that as he, creates good and evil; without whom no weapon formed to destroy, no Smith that blows in the coals for it, no waster that uses it, is erected.

Secondly, an affection of Honour to you, expressing it self in an endeavour to vindicate your Calamities out of all such rude, black, dark Lanthorn-hands, and to surrender them into his; by whom to be chastised without hatred, how severely soever, is honourable; but by any other, servile and abject.

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From this Hand, even when it smites, if it be humbly and repentantly turned to, drops a Balm that heals, and an Oyl of excellent kindness distils, that doth not break our heads, but soften our hearts: An Unguent that doth not only embalm us for suffering, but anoint us for Holiness and Happiness. This Rod, after it hath stricken, if it be accepted, blossoms in a night, and suddenly flourishes with the peaceable fruits of Righteousness.

He that touches an affliction immediately after God, by faith and obedience to the ends of it, shall find his fingers dropping with the sweet-smelling Myrrour, but taken out of any other Forge, there is nothing to be felt, but the cold

more

A A

Iron

The Dedication.

Iron prepared to mischief, and the impurity of it self, and the offices through which it hath passed.

He that ascribes our Ruines to any but God, sows them with salt and barrenness; he that assures them from him, gives us the upper and neither Springs of gracious motion to God, and Blessing from him.

All Paraphrases upon our Sufferings, out of the Atheists Chair, are as the Corn that withereth before it groweth up, wherewith the Mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bolom; nor do any say, We bless you in the Name of the Lord: The true Interpretations of them lead us out to sow indeed in tears; but that we may reap in joy; that going

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ing forth, and bearing precious seed, we may come again rejoicing, and bring our sheaves with us. Who would not then chuse to find himself fallen into the hands of God, with whom tender mercies dwell, and gracious purposes mollifie the greatest rigours; as the harshness of medicaments is overcome with the sweetness of the health they design?

Who? except the stupid Ignorant, the Atheistick contemner of God and his Hand, the prophane Sensualist, the hardened Impenitent, who hates to be reformed; and therefore all evils upon them are the Brands of an Eternal Judgment, and print Hell upon their flesh; the private marks of which are first upon their Souls.

But

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But you, who have a wife and grave apprehension of all things, much more of those wherein you are concerned with God; especially in his solemn interviews with you, though of Judgment, will give Glory to him, by acknowledgments, It is the Lord; and therefore will not walk contrary to him, but searching wherein he hath been dishonoured, whether in denying that Amplitude, and Example to Religion, or allowing freedoms to evil, will turn to him, by reducing things to an order, befitting Humiliation under his Hand; both within your private Walls, and in your more publick Administrations.

And this not only from Principles of self-preservation, but out of
Grati-

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Gratitude, and love to those compassions, which interposed, that you should not be utterly consumed, as *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, by a Judgment that so nearly resembled theirs.

From which compassions those vigorous designations and daily rising hopes of a new City, are now receiving life, which make this a fit season to present you these considerations, seeing a holy Improvement of passed Judgments is the best kind of *Telestma* against future Evils.

Now that Ruler of all the World, whose goings out are from everlasting, who of old laid the Foundations of this City, who prospered it into its late Grandeur, who derived upon it the
con-

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confluence of that wealth, adorned with the Ingeny, Arts, and Learning of the whole World; decorated it with a Civick Authority; even to Majesty, ennobled it with the Thrones of *England*: who lately in righteous Judgment for sin, humbled, laid it low, even with the ground, that it yet sits (but brooding) upon its own ashes; raise it again out of them, increase the Glory of it seven-fold along succeeding Ages, draw it out of the fire a vessel of Honour refined, make his Church in it a brightest Candlestick of the Gospel of Peace, after it hath been a mountain burning with fire, that could not be touched; create a new Heaven and Earth in it, wherein Righteousness may dwell, after this
disso-

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dissolution of Elements ; make it
exemplary for Reformation to this
Nation, as it hath been for suffer-
ing, make the name of it for ever,
Jehovah Shammah, The Lord is
there.

In these Prostrations Rests,

Your Humblest Servant,

T. B.

The



The General Address.

THere is a Spirit in Man, that within the Sphere wherein he moves, is very curious and inquisitive to understand, how things are carried, and what is done, or falls out in the world; and when he observes any thing new or great, his Inquiries stay not in the things themselves, but rifle them for the causes and springs of them.

This men do agreeably to their Elevation and Compass, even from those that reside in the higher and vaster Orbs of Government, down to those that are circumscribed within the narrownesses of meaner conditions: who yet not only stretch themselves round their own little circles, but

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but ascend as high, and run out as far as they can into what is above and beyond them.

Who of any largeness of mind, would have the great Revolutions in any part of the world concealed from him? Men of a very common size of Soul are acquainted with the motions of their own Nation; and they who are crowded up in the least room of Understanding, comprehend the things of their neighbourhood, and the Periodical changes of the State they live under.

Herein wise men cast themselves backward upon former times, and desire a knowledge from History, much elder than themselves, prædate their lives to the oldest moments, by their researches what was done in them, their Judgment upon, and affectionate

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nate Sympathies therewith. Again they throw themselves forward upon Futurity by all ways of Divination possible ; but how much more do they settle upon their own Center of Time ; and in that, the fresh and new emergencies challenge their most conversable thoughts : wherein they rest not in the bare Events, but are earnest to know the bottom and reason of them ; and to sound their Original as far as they can ; and this every one doth according to the innate sagacity or improved observation he hath attained.

Thus that natural examinateness of man pierces every way to its utmost possibility.

Now all this so far, as ingrafted sense of a God, or the Discipline of Religion, hath its effect upon the Soul, turns it self to God, to observe the daily occurrences of his Provi-

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dence, and the Magnificencies of his Power, either in mercy or wrath; and comparing one thing with another, makes a Character of the times, according to those signs imprinted upon them by the Divine Hand.

Where this is not done, it is a negligence so supine, and contemptful of God, that our Saviour rebukes it from the most ordinary marks of humane attention, which is often more bold and prying then becomes it; and yet dissembles and pretends a modesty, when it is called to understand God and his doings.

He then that hath not viewed the bulk or extern presence of the late Judgments of God upon England, must either be an utter stranger to it, or to whatever is called Man.

He that hath not particularly, and with an inquisitiveness agreeable to
the

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the searches of mans Soul, made a rational inspection into them, hath not aspired to the more Heroick efforts of a Soul.

Lastly, he that hath not ascribed them to God, and considered his intentions, and the reformation comporting therewith, hath not answered the obligations of a conscience, that in all things reveres a Deity; much less behaved himself as one placed in the highest Class of Religion, I mean that most excellent one of Christianity.

This following Discourse presumes to no more, then to give occasion to these native exercises of men, concerning the Judgments of God in General; and then to incline them upon the particulars so fresh upon us.

First, to bring to their view those so notable Events of the late years,

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that they may know of them, whether they are things of every day; which besides the common work hath upon some parts of it these huge Balls fixed, besides the natural curling of its waves, the swelling of such mountainous Billows.

That they were very portentous, the very amazed concernedness of all sorts of men about them demonstrated; and after-History will in recounting them, take that state to itself, which it assumes in relation of greater things.

2. To propose to their Reason, whether they are not most justly owned to him that made and governs the world; and whether there is not as great reason to acknowledge the one to him, as the other.

Lastly, to advise with their Conscience, whether if Judgments of
God,

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God, they are not the most persuasive Intercessors of Repentance and Amendment of life to this whole Nation : seeing the reasons why so gracious a Power punishes, are sins ; and if these continue, the executions of Judgment must rise higher , till they swell into destruction, or eternal wrath : except he that is the Author of them were suspected of weakness of Counsel, to do so great things to no purpose, or want of power to furnish him with means to pursue his end.

Which consideration , if lively applied , would be most constraining of our humblest and most penitent supplications and returns to God ; both out of love to him , who having so great a reach over us, would make us better, and not destroy us, and out of love to our selves, that we may not by further provoking him , even ne-

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cessitate him to our ruine.

For though we cannot abate that blessed Being so far, as to impute to him the passions and discomposures of anger; but remove from him the trouble and disquiet that enter into Humane Indignations: yet we cannot so much diminish from his own expressions of his wrath, but to believe the effects of it much more real, then those of created displeasures, how many wisdoms and methods soever they run through.

And though we own him above, and without extern cause; yet we must acknowledge according to the determinations he hath made, he doth with the highest freedoms of his own will, and a tranquillity infinitely agreeing with his eternally happy condition, execute punishments upon sinners according to his Laws: even as
a just

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a just Prince suffers procedures of Justice against Offenders without any disturbance or passion upon himself; more, then that he delights not in the misery of his Subjects, but cannot because of that, bend Righteousness from its own exaltness; though he is still ready to moderate it by pardons upon becoming reasons: Even as there are in God the relentings of his infinite Goodness at the sorrows and contritions of humbled sinners.

Now in these considerations lye the great obligations of Repentance, and invitations to it, exciting the most powerful Principles of self-preservation, and more ingenuous affection in mans Soul, and apprehending the most advantageous handles of it, Love and Fear.

Such an Appeal then, as this to
a 4 men,

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men, to use their own sentiments in things of so clear an importance, ought to be made to every one, but with more particular address to the Heroes of the Nation, whose Understanding and Virtue amplified with the Advantages of Government and Condition, set them upon the higher risings of the world, and give them the freest prospect upon all things; from whence they discover not only secondary expedients of the Common Peace and Weal, but also if these are governed by piety, they will find those primer ones, the worthier Policies of conciliating the Divine Favour.

Such as do this, extend themselves beyond Domestick Blessings, and become the Publick Good; who having an Interest and Example to spread, and Influences to derive, consecrate

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secrete them to God, and the good state of a Nation with him; that as their opportunities of knowledge are most open, their Interests widest, and their senses of evil quickest; so their endeavours against that sin which ruins Kingdoms, and for that piety that exalts them, is most earnest.

When perswasions of Reformation find freest entertainment with those who have most power to promote it, and Princes are not only Philosophers, but Divines, publishing Repentance and Amendment of life, by those Sovereign Documents, the face of their Authority and Example shining upon Holiness; how orderly doth this Reformation descend from the Superior Regions? without that tumult and suspicion of Design that usually accompanies Popular Attempts therein; and with greatest Honour:

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Honour : For such being nearer God, the Original of all, we accept from them recommendations of goodness, as Acts of Bounty with thankfulness ; but not without disdain and regret from them below us : There being ever an exprobration in that inversion of Order and Nature, when we receive the light or dew of Heaven from beneath, that should come down from above to us.

It must needs be a Rebuke from Heaven upon the upper world, when in the silence of Religion, Judgment, and Equity there, God opens the vulgar mouths to call for them ; and yet if these should hold their peace, there is so great a constraint for the want, that even the stones would cry out.

The Reason that forsakes men, transmigrates as it were into insensible things : Universal Wisdom having

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wing so contrived, that as the neglect goes down lower and lower; things lowest should be moved to convince them above, till the nethermost foundations of the Earth are stirred to reprove disobedient man, though at the other higher end of it.

When the Seats of Dignity are empty (that is) not filled with good Government, who is not ready to press into them? and when the Prophets Chairs are unfurnished by persons of graver investiture, naked Sauls crowd into them; as they say, Nature swells out of its place to prevent vacuity.

Or rather the plenitude of wisdom, that flows from God the Fountain, is so immense, that being excluded its proper place, as a full stream forced out of its own Channel, it bursts into another, or overflows all; or like

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like the Apostles Doctrine, which driven from the Jews, expatiated upon the Gentiles.

But these extravasations are ever in themselves dangerous, if not deadly; this Wisdom never shewing it self out of the residences it hath chosen, as fittest for it, but in wrath; when it speaks by men of lower rank, what it would do by Superiors; or by the Creatures, what men should understand themselves: It is in Judgment to forbid their madness.

May it then be the Happiness of our Times and Nation, to be rescued from the further pursuits of the Divine displeasure, by the mediation of personages of place, and lawful suffrages, that have not taken their Honour to themselves, or by the Indignation of God thrust into it.

To

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To whom to present these two
Generals of Reformation, that are
not of any private Interpretation,
or Opinion, but of the sense of all
sober understanding, will not be ac-
counted presumption, though they
know, and do the things already.

I. An efficacious Interposal a-
gainst Licentiousness of Practices,
which grows speedily to a height;
when those, whose honour and gra-
ve forbids them to stoop to those
messes of vice, which others
fall down to, have not yet that
zeal against it, but either draw too
nigh the Circus or Ring of the
Disorders, beholding them with
pleasure, or entertain the Actors
of them with familiarity: Any of
which give a boldness to wicked-
ness, that soon espies its own ad-
vantages, and grows insolent up-
on

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on them, ready not only to rise with violence against common opposition, but to dismount Authority itself; which hath no greater security than its own virtue enstamped upon those under it.

Solomons advice not to be over-much wicked, hath not only equal, but larger place upon States than upon persons; for besides, that Justice makes more haste to punish a Combination in evil, the force of contrary passions and lusts so outrageous, that they violate all things in their mutual encounters; and the inundation grows so strong through the meeting of so great a Body of Evil, that the destructive force runs into suddenner confusions, and is more impatient of those abatements, a single wickedness must admit; and so more leisurely brings forth death. There

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There are possibly few Instances of any such, who have been the notorious Debauches of their time, but have been exemplary for the Fate attending them, except prevented by sudden returns to a sober mind: but not any of an extremely corrupted Age, but unhappiness, if not ruine, have trodden along with it.

But could it be, that a stream of wickedness had run like Oyl, smooth and untroubled; yet with that time wherein it so ran, look black to Posterity; not Chance, but some unchangeable Law giving the Character always alike, which is ever derived from those of Eminency; as when Pictures are taken, the Head, and parts of the Body nearest to it, are generally thought enough to represent the whole:

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whole: thus when the Portraiture of any Time is given, the Aspect of Majesty, the Seat of Authority, and Understanding are the life, and the rest added to make the Grace of them the greater, and more impressive from the beauty of a full proportion.

2. A potent opposition to Atheism, and scornful neglect of the Solemnities of Christianity; which when it is professed, hath the weight of prosperity or ruine resting upon it: for as God often hung the Glory or Desolation of the Princes & people of Judah, upon the observation of their Sabbath, though an extern Rite of Religion, because it carried so much of the Reverence of Divine Worship, and the Acknowledgments of God: so he still suspends the Greatness

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ness or Depression of Nations, to whom the notices of himself and Jesus Christ are given, upon their subjection to those Sacred Principles and the Institutions wherein they are conserved. And because we have fallen into the mention of a Sabbath, and these Institutions have their full room in it; it is not out of the way of this Address to observe, That our Christian Sabbath is slipped out of the shell of a Jewish Ceremony, into the Spirituality of the Lords Day, and the Morality of a Rest for the publick and private Exercises of Religion; on which accounts, our Obligations to it still continue with those advantages wherein it was made for man: All contemptful disenclosures or unworthy prostitutions of it, must needs therefore imply not only a great senselessnes of God and
b his

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his Glory, whom we would dispute into the narrowest rooms, but too much of an irreverence of him, if not defiance to him.

Were it possible there could be a severe suppression of Vice, and inclination to Virtue without Piety, yet would it be dishonourable without the Illustration of Religions Glories; The highest care of those that truly understand Honour is the paying all due Observances to God, the Fountain of Honour; who honours them that honour him, but delivers to infamy or contempt those that lightly regard him.

As some States, that have enacted virtuous Laws, and been vigilant in their execution, have not yet been hereby able to recompense themselves for the want of a lawful Prince, but have appeared foul and stained;
much

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much less can any other Acts of Government, how splendid soever, redeem from infamy days full of injury done to Laws of supremest value (that is) Religion.

But it is indeed unreasonable to think, Irreligion should be just or sober (especially wherethere is the name of a Church included within that of a Common-wealth.) The Virtuosi of the Heathen assumed the Fear of the Deity, as the true dye of common honesty. For he that is conscious to himself of so great an Injustice, as the neglect of his Duty to God, cannot rationally be fideliours to any other parts of Righteousness. Besides, that God in a just scorn dashes in pieces those little Idols of Virtue that set up for themselves without him, by delivering up to a reprobate sense, to great injudiciousness in some, or

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other of the Essential points of Morality, those that do not like to retain him in their knowledge, or knowing God, do not glorifie him as God.

To conclude. This first and great Commandement, Piety towards God, and the second like to it, Christian Morality, do so reciprocate, that one without the other is neither true, nor accepted.

These are first the Interest and Peace of every single person, and to be his care in his retired Administration over himself; next of Families, and the Oeconomy therein; lastly, of greater Communities, and the Rulers over them, to whom is committed the custody of these two Tables: when these are obliterated, or exauſterated by sin, God publishes them afresh from the dreadful Mount, and engraven with his own Finger in
Judg.

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Judgments, that they may still be preserved in full force. He promulgates them with that Trumpet with which they were at first given, the sound of which having increased louder and louder to this Nation, should awake us to receive them with a new Devotion.

These things upon the grounds of the ensuing Discourse, are presented to General Consideration, under the Favour of Divine Benediction.

The



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Besides the mistakes of pointing, which the Favourable Reader will reconcile to Sense, let him be pleased to correct the more material, thus.

PAge 10. line 1. for that, read they, p. 16. l. 7. for whole, r. while they, l. 17. for dissoluted, r. desolated, p. 25. l. 3. blot one, p. 26. l. 9. for sound, r. formed. p. 30. l. 21. r. Ravillac, p. 54. l. 19. r. Ante-Rooms, p. 77. l. 25. for it, r. its ways, p. 89. l. 10. for suing, r. seeing, p. 109. l. 27. r. Trochus, p. 120. l. 26. for then, r. thus, p. 129. l. 3. r. postulate, p. 130. l. 13. r. unfolded, p. 133. l. 21. r. adopted, p. 136. for that, r. they, p. 144. after Improve, blot it, p. 148. l. 26. for inscured, r. inslated, p. 152. l. 16. for guided, r. girded, p. 164. l. 27. r. clue, p. 165. l. 12. after (sweetness put in viz. p. 168. l. 25. r. enslaved, p. 171. l. 23. r. insprehenliveness, p. 175. l. 4. after true, blot and, p. 176. l. 20. r. between it and all, p. 181. l. 14. for bran, r. bear, p. 185. for discult, r. disease. p. 191. after l. 17. put in vain confidence looses it itself, p. 196. for when, r. where, p. 198. l. 21. r. ἀντίφωχ, p. 204. l. 25. for salve, r. salvo, p. 210. l. 8. r. Countier, p. 212. l. 16. for arms, r. army, p. 226. l. 24. for contracts, r. contrasts.



CHAP. I.

A Prefatory Discourse, shewing the Excellency of Scripture in discovering to us that Judgments are from God, and leading us from Atheism to the true use of them.

IT hath pleased God to cast us into those times wherein Atheistick Opinions, as well as Practices, have dared a contest with his Judgments: That the boldness of either Monster, speculative or practick Atheism, should be permitted to outlive, or over-grow such convictions of his hand lifted up, as we have had, is by every good man as earnestly to be deprecated, and with as great a compassion to the Age in which he lives to be born off, as a common Ruine. For all Judgments being the strange Acts of God, and those we have felt, the most
 B unusual

unusual of those strange Acts, they come near Miracles, and are like his finger on *Pharaoh*, and the Jews; and therefore to impute them to Chance, or Nature, or any thing below God, comes also too near their debasement of Divine Power, and ascribing it to *Beelzebub*, that they might not be constrained to submit to it: A sin that our Saviour tells us, is not forgiven in this world; which sounds more to such kind of men, then to add, Nor in the world to come. This were indeed to be delivered up to a reprobate sense, which is the greatest of Judgments, and precedes destruction: It being very rare, that God suffers himself, and the Majesty he carries in the world, to be trodden under foot, when he hath begun the assertions of them; but that lesser strokes (which are Discipline) ceasing, the fatal blow follows: when the wind, to fan and cleanse, lies without success, the dry wind from the wilderness, that blasts and withers all, soon after rises; when God thinks it vain, men should be stricken any more, because they revolt more and more, and will not so much as owne him that strikes;

strikes; he then strikes once for all, and affliction rises not up the second time.

It is necessary then, all that have together a sense of God and Publick good, should interpose against those idle words that corrupt good manners, that dis-entitle God to our calamities, and so enfeeble all those inferences of Reformation, that are deducible from the acknowledgment of him as the Author; and also against those evil manners that arise and corrupt Communications, having nothing else for their security, but to plead, that God doth neither good nor evil.

Now these things distil first from the upper sort of men, who having the advantage to build their lusts above others, screw up by themselves, or the ministry of servile wits, a falsified reason to the height of those lusts; whence they fall upon the lower world, which as greedily, though not with such a discretion of sensuality, drinks them in.

This following Discourse is therefore levelled to this end; that every man of all sorts owning his hand, may make no doubt, but his Kingdom hath come up-

on us in his late dreadful Providences, and so may give glory to him.

The grounds of it are, that reason of Scripture, which being the Book of God, gives the History of the Government and Acts of God in the world. For as the Records of any Nation or Prince, are to be found with their proper Historians, and we seek them with most reason and success, where the accounts of them are professedly offered: Even so the digests of Holy writing render us the best assurances of God in the world, and ascribe to him that which is his own, with greatest sincerity.

Though therefore there are many confessions to God from the light of Nature, and its Prophets; yet those whom God himself deputed to the testimonies of himself, are much more to be trusted, carrying along with them a clear, constant, and even Tenor of Truth.

And the Examples he singles out to demonstrate his own Dominion, Justice, or Goodness in the world, are much fairer than those that are forreign to the Scripture. Even as a wise Reasoner makes
choise

choice of the best Arguments ; when an ordinary Disputer, though he may fall upon such as have truth, yet not upon those that are most cogent.

To us, to whom the Word of God is the measure and fountain of Truth, all its affirmations are demonstrations : Its repeated inculcating and exemplifying of things in matters of Fact, are like strongest concatenations of reason.

Yet as God often took the Pagan world within the Verge of his Word, and extended the line of Prophecy upon the utmost distant earth, therein, at once laying fuller assurances of himself for his own people, and advantages of acknowledging him, for the use of those that were not yet profelyted to him : Which Word (besides the authority of, *Thus saith the Lord*) carries also a high hand of reason and evidence along with it ; that if any would but shew themselves men, they must needs be convinced by it. Even so may we make use of all reasons to confirm the faith of them who first rest it in Scripture ; and to compel those to bow to what it declares, who think not themselves obli-

ged to believe Oracles, though Divine, where they are not supported and pointed by those Ratiocinations, wherein they put more trust.

While then we center upon the Revelations of God, & upon them endeavor to compass all that is indeed sound, we shall find whatever is fit to argue us into that wisdom & seriousness to which so awful a hand hath summoned us.

In evincing the reasonableness of our grand Position, That God is the Author of all our calamities, we have this singular advantage, that every step we take in acquitting it from utter impossibility and unreasonableness, is in the place of a great reason. For it being carried in the high stream of all Mankind's consent, it is most rational it should be accepted wherein it cannot be convicted of popular error and mistake: whereas Atheism herein hath nothing to settle upon, but a wickedness generally condemned (even by the very Atheist, that assumes Morality) and a reason unstamped, unauthorized by suffrage. It must therefore have so great a validity of Demonstration, as
may

may be accepted for it self; which being indeed impossible to be found, the field must be left to that victorious Truth, and every man obliged to that Duty and Repentance it calls for. In which last particular, the very enemy of it befriends it; for as if it were clear, there were a God, the Atheist that would seem just and impartial to all things, and avoids the suspicion of chusing his Opinion from his life, professes he would turn the force of his reason for Religion and Service to the Deity: Even so, if all we suffer be from God, he will say, It is most necessary we should by all means agreeable to his Nature, make it our business to appease him; wherein the practical Atheist is deserted by the Contemplator against a God and his Providence, and left alone as a person most unreasonable, and desperately forsaken of all sense; who owning so great a Principle, governs not himself with conformity to it.

But we are in no want of Concessions from Atheism, nor from so much as better taught Morality, though we thus speak. For in points of Reason and Dis-

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course, that anointing of the Spirit of God in his Word, leads the humble Christian into all truth, and is it self truth, who hath therefore no need that any should teach him; yet he accepts the tributes of subordinate understanding also. In historical accounts the sacred Chronology hath days enough to speak to us, and years to teach us that knowledg that grows from matters of Fact, though all story may serve it as a Commentary.

In the Principles of holy and wise practice, we need not the Cisterns that are broken and often foul, having the fountains of living water, and the Chrystal Sea it self; yet we may allow, that as all waters, so far as they are wholsom, come from this Sea, they should with a percolation return thither again.

In all these, whatever we receive from the words of God is genuine, and of the true alloy, purified seven times; which the most sublimated Moralist hath only in the Ore, ignorant of the true Arts of Refinement.

All accounts from thence are steddy, even, and uniform with themselves, their

their path pondered, and their eye strait before them; compared with these, all others are giddy, distracted and uncertain; when they have spoken like wise men in some things, that Spirit of Truth and Wisdom not inhabiting them, they fall into the wildnesses of mad men, and the impertinencies of Fools; whence all the superstition that hath been in the world, hath continually sprung.

In Scripture all things are full, and to the height; but in others scanty, and below the true elevation. For though they speak at any time that is great and worthy God, considered by it self, yet not like his Servant *Job*: They know not, nor can pronounce the great Tetragrammaton, the Eusebeia of the Gospel, nor the true Evangelick Righteousness and soberness: What they discourse is either so thin and airy through Philosophick attenuation, that it loses its weight and substance, its usefulness and intelligibility to common capacity, or else it is too thick and gross. Scripture knows only to speak plainly, yet most divinely.

Of most things that have only some imperfect resemblances, and half expressions, Scripture is only able to interpret to them their Prophetick Dreams of Divine matters, as *Daniel* to *Nebuchadnezzar*; which by its explanations become excellent sense.

Lastly, holy Oracles are the natural Soil, the native Country of all Divine truths; transplanted from them into more rigid and barren ground, they lose their first sweetness; or as Colonies sent from it, they forget their Mother-City, the true *Jerusalem*, and by length of time grow first strange, then inimick, till by a captivity and recovery of them, as spoils taken by the Sword and Bow of Original truth, they are reduced, instructed in their own descent, and restored to their noble alliances.

Thus Religion draws home all those branches and stems of it self, from those artificial Roots, upon which they grew weakly, or degenerated through the unnaturalness of the moisture conveyed to them from false Principles; although if they might have had their own force and vigour, they would have meliorated the

the worse, but being over-power'd, they lose their own excellency.

But from this general Discourse of Scripture, we return to the particular case; the fulness and sufficiency of it to teach every man concerning the Judgments of God, what he is to know and to do touching their revolutions in the world.

Herein the Fundamental Doctrines, plain Precepts, Promises, Comminations there to be found, lead us to actions great and serious; even as the Judgments themselves, which are the most solemn of Providences; all procedures of Justice carrying along with them highest gravity, and requiring a suitable reverence. And because we see them best in Examples, which are admonitions taken out of words, and printed into things; we upon whom the ends of the world are come, are made to sit upon the shoulders of former times, through the favour of Scripture-history, beholding the Saints of God in their holy, humble, and heavenly demeanour in bad times, and their happy issue out of temptation: On the other side, the miscarriage

riage of obstinate men, with their sad Fates; that whoſo is wiſe to obſerve thoſe things, and prudent to know them, may underſtand, The ways of the Lord are right, and that men upright, and ſtraight in themſelves, may walk in them; but tranſgreſſors, whoſe feet are crooked, their motions indirect, and they froward in all their paths, cannot hold themſelves on ſo ſtrait a line, but fall therein.

CHAP. II.

An Explanation of the Nature of Judgments.

THe Judgments of God are like another Volumn of his Works, fitted firſt for our contemplation; *As the inviſible things of him from the Creation of the world, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: ſo are the ſame arrayed in juſtice and righteouſneſs, apparent in thoſe that are as it were unmade, and decreed in his wrath. For ſeeing that immense Eſſence cannot be comprehended in his own*
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Globe of light and purity ; we need all the refractions he is pleased to make of himself , that we may understand him. These of his wrath, which is holiness provoked by sin, declare that part of his glory : and there is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. For their line is gone out through all the Earth , and their words to the ends of the world. In them hath he set a Tabernacle for his Justice, which rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race, and the acts of it in their season are new every morning. For they are as the light that goeth forth.

Before we enter into the Rational parts of this Discourse , let us stand and behold the state and order of Judgments as in Theory.

1. Judgments are those evils that exceed the standard vanity and vexation of spirit , that are the every days complaint of the whole Creation , rational, sensitive, and insensate, in their several kinds of deploration of themselves. For these are the Covenant made with all things after the Fall , and as it were the very terms and conditions upon which they

they stand in the world, and not new things under the Sun to move wonder and search : Yea that death and dissolution into which every thing below the Heavens sinks, either by degrees, or unawares, and is lost in that dark, amounts not to the nature of what we call Judgment ; but moves with life in such a kind of even vicissitude, as day and night, and inter-changes with as little noise.

But Judgments are the hand of God lifted up to shew a greater indignation. The former are indeed the angry prints and Characters of a settled Justice, that rests and fixes upon that radical pravity and evil of mans nature, and keeps pace and constant motion with the continual actuations of it.

But as there is a difference between the distempered state and corruption of Mankind, with its scintillations, as from a perpetual fire, and more notorious enormities ; so is there between the unintermitted discipline that chastises man, as a Creature out of the first favor and grace with God, and those more terrible approaches, when he comes out
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of his place, and does his strange work upon sinners, that they dye not the common deaths of men.

Yet in both these, viz. natural corruption, and constant infelicity, lye the seeds and matter; which being either suddenly blown up, or by degrees gathered together, swell high in an instant, or with leisure grow to a sum corresponding each other.

For as depraved Nature breaks out into outrageous impiety, or by repeated acts of it self, rises to its measure; so it is answered by God with sudden Thunder-claps of his wrath, or the bringing out those Treasures, that by daily additions have been amassed, and are issued out in the just seasons appointed by him.

In the mean time, as there are many excellent Rules of Religion and Morality consistent with the one, which do not only govern particular persons, who are Heroick herein, but spread themselves by wholesome Laws and Counsels upon Communities, and adorn the Chronicle of that Age, of which they have first been the stability: so are there
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great accounts of the goodness of God contemporary with the other, and rich acts of his bounty, which do most eminently bless whole Nations as well as persons, and recommend the times current over them to posterity, as prosperous and happy : but all the whole world is neither acquitted from this guilt of universal corruption, nor exempted from the misery so closely woven into every state of it.

This condition of the world hath given occasion to great inquiries, how it lapsed into it ; some resolution of which is hereafter intended : but now we observe how much even this differs from the more tumultuous and dissoluted appearance of things under Judgment, when a resemblance of the Garden of *Eden* becomes a Wilderness, and what we now call Prosperity, is clouded with over-ruling adversity. We come into the world, and finding it as it is in its most constant estate, think it was never better, till by way of negation, removing the evils we perceive to be such, and *viâ eminentiæ*, measuring how much higher things might have been, we ascend

cend in our thoughts to the first perfection. But Judgments, without any such circuit or elaboration, are down-right proofs of wrath and misery, and that things are not as they were designed to be.

2. The intention of this Discourse is especially to observe Judgments, as they comprehend Nations, and infold Communities : For though God visits obscurest persons, and Families with them, yet they renown themselves by their large spread upon greater pieces of the world, and the stretch of themselves upon Thrones, Cities, and Countries, over which they draw the line of confusion and desolation ; in so much that their descriptions are proportionable to that general dissolution of all things, at the end of the world : of which they are indeed smaller Maps and preparatory introductions. The Prophet foretelling these, speaks in a language proper to the day of Judgment ; when the mountains shall tremble out of their places, and the foundations of the earth discover themselves ; the Sun and Moon resign their light, and the Stars
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forſake their Orbs, and fall from their Heaven. All which ſolemnities are borrowed to repreſent the down-fall and judgment of particular places and Kingdoms.

While we conſider them thus, they are upon a hill, and fitter for general obſervation, as being more publick, and inſtructions from them more comprehensive; though the ſame reaſons have place, and like admonitions ariſe from the hand of God, however it plants it ſelf, or grounds its work, if the motions of it fall under our view, and offer themſelves to our notice.

3. Theſe Evils ariſe ſometimes from Nature turned out of its courſe, and loſing that poiſe God hath with greateſt wiſdom given it; from whence come all thoſe inequalities and intemperatures that produce Famines, Peſtilences, Earthquakes, Storms, and Deluges.

For when all things were ſetled by God in number, weight and meaſure, for the advantage of the world, and welfare of the whole Creation; there neceſſarily follows, when they are diſ-

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ordered , ruine and misery , according to the degrees of the disorder , both through the cessation of that benefit , their right course carried with it ; and also through the violence of causes out of their places , and those exorbitant motions which are the fury and rage of Nature.

Besides these , there are also the terrible conflicts of the lusts and passions of men striving upon the great Sea of the world , roaring like Thunder , flashing like Lightning , tearing more greedily than Tempests , and that put all things into greater Convulsions than Earthquakes.

There are no greater evils upon Mankind , than those of which he himself is the Engineer ; Blood , War , Rapine , and Terror devouring without mercy , are bred in his own bowels , and executed by himself , being the combates of those fiery exhalations which arise from his unruly Soul . From whence come wars and fightings among you ? Come they not hence ? Even from your lusts , that war in your members ? And these often introduce

as suddenly and inevitably those Famines and Pestilences , which come more kindly out of the hand of what in this case we style Nature. Throughout Scripture, and all History , we find God in justice using man against himself, and creating him the severest enemy of his own kind. He prosecutes peccant Cities , Nations , by some others that are fitted to bring to pass his righteous ends, being no less under him , then the several Creatures that seem more immediately his instruments, and the reins of which are acknowledged in his hand, to turn them every way as he pleases.

4. All these we define to be Judgments ; that is, They come upon the world through the design and counsel of the supreme Cause of all things, God himself ; and are neither Revolutions, that arriving at such a Period , must needs shew themselves like Eclipses in such a Nodus; or accidental and eventual things, that through long tosses of them hither and thither , fall out and happen to be , and by constant throwing of them, hit sometimes thus, sometimes otherwise : But they are the most
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mature and sage determinations of an infinite mind and understanding ; that though he cuts the lines of his own motions often, and labyrinths them through one another , so that we can find no certain path ; yet will he at last adjust all he disposes, to the conviction of the whole world. And yet we stay not here, but pursue the sense of this awful word, Judgments ; in w^{ch} the Scripture comparing spiritual and divine things with themselves, so much delights. They are the execution of a just and righteous Sentence of God upon the evil actions of man , according to Laws of unquestionable equity ; wherein his own glory and the truest peace of the whole Creation lye together concerned (the establishment of Order and Government requiring so necessarily the punishment of sin) so that they are neither the displays of his meer pleasure, or the *Arcana Imperii*, the Cabals of his Dominion or Rule of the world ; but the presence of his infinite Justice , and Jurisdiction over all things, how much soever the administration of so great an Empire falls within it ; which doth

certainly conspire herein: as is hereafter to be shewn.

CHAP. III.

An Endeavour to demonstrate by sound Reason, That Judgments are from God.

THe great matter of debate we are first to take notice of in the account we have given of Judgments, is, That they are from the infinite Wisdom & Counsel of God, carrying a course of Justice in the world: which is established by these following perswasions.

1. By those reasons and assurances we have for the truth of the Scriptures, all which must needs come home to the proof of what they do most industriously assert and teach, and which they make so great a point of their Doctrine. To every one that acknowledges them the Word of God, it is out of all Controversie, that all the evil that is in the City is to be ascribed to his directing and over-ruling hand, who forms the light of prosperity, and creates the dark-

darkness of adversity ; and that this he doth for the punishment of sin. Since then so great and weighty moments of reason have been insisted upon by those who have placed their labours in demonstrating the truth of Scripture ; and the sense of that in this case , among all the Disputes that have been raised out of it, hath not been called into question (except by men deprived of common understanding) we may challenge all that reason to our selves in assuring this Principle. But further then this. All those instructions which are so plentifully given us in Holy Writing, and wherein it travels so earnestly to direct us into the right bearing and removing these pressures , would be altogether unuseful and vain, if God were not the Author of them : For to those that remove him out of this Province , fatal Nature or Chance seem with most decency of reason to be appointed over it : All invisible Beings guided by Intelligence and Will , are as dreadful to them, as Spectres to Children , both for the evidence they give to a Spiritual world, and the Scale that leads up from

them to God as their supreme Origine.

But who that is wise, would set himself to appease, or exorate a marble and insensible Fate, or compound with a giddy Chance that knew nothing of what they did before, nor so much as when it is come to pass; that are ignorant and uncertain what will be done next? being such kind of causes, that neither govern; for that were an act of reason; nor are governed; for that imports a reason over them. Yet these nor knowing, nor willing any thing, nor able to either, are supposed to have this so great Principality over all; which makes it impossible, that we should with any hope of benefit endeavour to move them towards us. But when a mind observes a mind; an inferior and subject mind, Man, the highest and most excellent mind, God; there is greatest reason to use all ways to find out the meaning of that most righteous and holy understanding, and to approach his ends with humblest prostrations of Soul, seeking his face, and the returns of his mercy; much more then, when
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among men one mind understands, and in cases of difficulty, even divines at one another; and he that is dependent, bows to him that is above him: whereas every one knows, it is in vain to woo Nature off its Adamantine pillars in those things wherein it is unmoveably fixed; no man prays or sacrifices to it, there may be no more night or Eclipses. And as vain it is to purifie our selves before a Fortune, or reconcile our selves to that which is so unacquainted with it self and us, that it can do us no favours; and so slippery, that it is impossible any sagacity or industry should be before-hand with it.

Although then some superstitious Rites have been done to both these; yet a certain understanding and will governing must have been conceived under them; or we must say of all Superstitions they were the most superstitious, that is the most unreasonable; so that, besides the main Position, those Doctrines of Humiliation before God, Repentance and Reformation (which are so great a part of Scripture) fall to
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the ground also, and with them the results of sound Reason and Morality, that tend the same way, though by a much dimmer and more wavering light, then the Word of God gives, which is most distinct and positive in this; first, That all the instruments of punishment, with their efficacies and Periods, are found and determined by the Lord himself: And then, that what he does therein, is with greatest counsel and equity; the ends of which are, so far as concerns us, made known to us, that by returns to God, according to those ends, we may procure the removal of the evils themselves: which is a clear account in reason, why we should wait upon God in the way of his Judgments.

Against this (which we say is a clear account in reason) no suspicions of secret Will or unmoveable Decrees in God, can take place; as if by their unchangeableness, they shut up these undertakings of man within the like inconveniences as the former.

For those that acknowledge the excellency of a Divine understanding, will easily

easily believe, it can draw a thred so fine and even between it self and mans Soul, that acts of highest reason and duty towards himself, should have all their encouragements, and yet himself without the least shadow of turning ; and if we cannot find this out to perfection, what wonder is it ? That were not an infinite understanding, whose contrivances are all fathomable by a finite ; yet let a man appeal to himself, and feel how consistently these things work within him, and his own experience shall be the witness hereof. For that Medium, in which these acts of man are to move, is made like the water or fluid air, soft and yielding, that it gives way, yet without losing its place, or abating from it self. Every thing hath its own play in it ; yet the Laws of it are severe and unchangeable. It is swathed with an eternal ordination upon it, and yet allows every thing its own liberty ; not like the compacted rock, that yields to no encounter, without dreadful violence ; but as the easie stream that is willing to comply, and is still under as constant a constitution as any other part
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of Nature, under him who sends up by the Hills, and down by the Valleys, these waters unto the place appointed for them; which do even persuade their way through the firm Mountains, that they may obey that Law that is upon them.

Augustus his taxing or describing the world, had its native progress in the pliant current of that determination, that Christ should be born in *Bethlehem*; and the prediction, it should be so, insinuated it self and its completion into the heart of a Prince, affecting a reflection upon his own Dominion; to which that heart was as penetrable as one stream of air, or rivulet of water to another; though often as the heart of Leviathan congealed with it self, so are the resolves and inclinations of majestic breasts. From whence we see, how possible the conceptions of our returns to God, finding their place in his most established Ordinations are; and how possible also are his Ordinations of our good, making their way through our returns to himself, while they mutually pass and repass themselves,

selves, without any infringement of one another.

That Decree of Gods to accept Penitents to mercy, is of the same date with any other of his disposes : as therefore they never clashed in that ævital Source of all things ; no more do they in their derivation from him upon time.

The difference is then infinite betwixt having to do with God, the most perfect mind and will, who sees into every thing, ballances one thing with another, and so composes time and Eternity, and draws them into Parallellisms ; that how ancient soever his Counsels are, he doth all he doth with as present an attemperation, as if he had never resolved of them before, but considered only their just now condition. Thus he pardons, as if his pardoning mercy were of the same date with our humiliation, and his compassion then inclined, when our repentance sues it : For his eternal purposes of Grace slide down to us with their own efficacy, and invite our Souls to those motions in which he delights ; vesting themselves
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first in our acts of duty towards him, and then crowning themselves in those acts with remission and removal of evil: so far are Divine determinations from putting those bars upon mans Soul, and its worthiest endeavours, that must needs be put upon them by those that set a dark Fate or Chance in the place of God.

2. All reasons that affirm God and his Providence; combine in this; That all our calamities are the Judgments of God. How close God and his Providence are united, may appear to us by those discourses which are written to that very purpose, and would be here a digression too great to insist upon. But in the general, we may accommodate the assertions of it to the minds of men, with this consideration; How close is Providence to an infinite Understanding, immense Power, unlimited efficacy, and presence. The narrow Souls of men entertain things one after another, and desire the first to withdraw, when they would be free with those that come after; or if we endeavour to converse with them together, we find a crowd

crowd and throng, which always begets tumult and confusion; so that many things cannot so much as lodge with us but with straitness and difficulty, and in danger to thrust out one another.

But with an Almighty mind, infinite also, every thing hath its own full room, and consideration, timely dispatch without cumber or aggravation to it.

As the eye of him that is upon a Tower, commands a multitude below with greatest ease and quiet of observation; so infinitely more doth the eye of Providence survey every thing, and is yet out of the dust of them.

We who are confined to a certain place, do with much pain and motion visit those things that require our care and superintendence, according to the distance they are in from us: But omnipresence needs no removes of it self, being much larger then its affairs, and the wing of its protection more spacious then the Creatures that are to come under it. Our little greatness loses its reputation, which is most of it self, by dealing with little things. But the highness of God, without any degrade, conder-

condescends to every Atome, as the Sun with its light, and yet removes not out of its Sphere, nor takes off its beams from greater things.

This summary meditation may shew us how easie Providence is to God. The unseparableness of it from him, is no less to be concluded by laying them thus together; he that is thus infinitely present with an increate, and therefore supreme understanding, always in Act, must industriously affect improvidence; which so great a goodness cannot (were it possible) or else he doth eternally provide. Further, we thus argue:

That the Fabrick of the world should derive it self from any but the spring of Being, is to deny that there is such a one: when it is in Being, that it should depend upon any but God himself, who is this Fountain of Essence, were to depute another into his Glory, which he tells us he will not give to any: but that he should at first create, and still support things without any consideration or reasons worthy his wisdom or praise; or that he should trust them to run on them-

themselves to those ends, is unbecoming the Sovereign understanding and power. That he should maintain the world to be the stage of ungoverned uncertainty, is so unlike the true apprehensions of God, that we can no sooner settle in the acknowledgment, that the whole Frame of Nature is his, and that it runs its course in his hand; but we must conclude, he is aware of all things that pass in his own world, and does not leave it as a field for things to take their chance in; but interposes himself to steer them to some certain Haven, wherein his own glory and the due end of things will be found together. There must therefore be a Providence. But that there should be a Providence, and Judgments not from God, is most unintelligible: For if we should allow things of a minute nature to slip this eye (which we can by no means do) yet to grant so great mutations, such huge dislocations as are in Judgments; and that they should come to pass, Providence being either not awake to consider them, or that the causes of them should never ask the consent of it; were

to confess the word, but withdraw the thing ; for there were nothing left, but a bare spectatorship.

If we suppose some malignant Spirits so violent upon the unhappiness of the world, as the Prince of them was upon *Jobs* destruction , and that they are not to be controlled by this higher ordination, we make it the same thing, as if there were no Providence ; for that is none in this case, that is not Almighty.

If there was a necessary connexion of things from the beginning, and there needs no after-consideration; yet if Providence did not, what put them so together ? and where was it ; when they were joynted into one another ? And why were they fixed upon such points of time ? If any should answer, they must fall somewhere, and it so fell out they should be placed as they are : It follows then, there was no room for Providence, nor indeed for the disposing of a rational will, but Fate and Chance took all out of the hand of God and infinite wisdom, which who, together with a Providence, can believe ? If then there be a God, there must be a Providence ;

dence; and if there be a Providence, all evils are Judgments from God upon men.

3. We may reason this from the so ready and immediate sense of conscience, not only of particular persons, but in general. For no sooner are men arrested with these strokes, but immediately they are apprehensive of a supreme and just hand that is upon them; and betake themselves to those Methods of atoneing it, which are within the compass of that Religion they understand. Now though this is ascribed by the enemies of God and Providence to an unreasonable fear, that hath been instilled into the minds of men by the cunning of those who have for their own ends made use of the natural jealousies and suspicions man is so prone to, through the weakness of his condition subject to every impression, and moulded them into this superstition: Yet let it be considered, there can be no greater presumption then thus to dishonour the universal sense of Mankind, and call into doubt what is sealed by the whole world.

For with as good satisfaction may the sanctions of Morality be unhinged from that awe and regard the minds of men bear to them, as if there were nothing in them, but the present use they are of. As for any intrinsic goodness that should induce their reverence and obedience, or reason for a sting of conscience as an immediate revenge of transgression, they must be refused as meer apparitions raised by affrighted reason, or conjured up by the Necromancy of State-policy: And if this be not sufficient to condemn any supposition of unreasonableness, what is?

But what can the Atheist relieve by his resolved opinions against a Divine hand in those evils good men style Judgments? neither able to shroud a man from the least of them, or to wrench out of his own mind the secret fears of some superior power, that guides them against the world.

In point of Judgment, the most he can pretend to, is but to arrive at the proof of this; That possibly he may be in the right (which indeed he never can to any tolerable acquiescence) In the
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mean time he leaves both himself, and all whom he would perswade to the force of the other side possibility; and with this disadvantage; if that which he would have, be true, it doth no man any considerable service to know it; or injury to be ignorant: for it abates nothing of the main evil, which certainly deals not more mercifully for an Atheistick conceit; or is any man condemned to suffer an excess of punishment for not being so irreligiously learned. But if that be true which he would not have so, he robs men of those remedies that are to be used for the prevention and remove of Judgments, and despoys them of that peace that comes in with the submission to so wise and holy a hand; besides the dangers of increasing the wrath by not acknowledging God in it. Certainly it is much more chusable to any man that is willing to make an Interest in God, or would have true peace, that all those unhappineses of the world should be so wisely and justly disposed, as we now discourse, then that they should be under no Law, or from no such Divine Counsel; with

which to comply, carries so great reason and advantage.

He that goes to help himself by removing this hand of Government out of the world, doth himself no other service then this, that he utterly takes away such a thing as a rational peace or patience, other then that upon force; leaving himself, first to the mercy of the next accident, afterwards under the necessity to bear what it lays upon him, without stirring himself under it; but submitting to it, because it cannot be otherwise, and only for that reason, because it cannot be otherwise. Whereas, he that owns God in all that comes upon him, hath a large Sphere of rational and pious motion, in contemplation of that righteousness and goodness that meet together in the infliction; which obliges him to resign to them, and out of a sense of them to compose himself into a more excellent and heavenly state of mind, which abundantly recompenses for the indurance. He hath the hopes of an eternal happiness, though he perish now; he hath the expectations of a seasonable relief, when the
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ends of such a gracious and wise Discipline are obtained. There are the present mitigations of the outward evil, those internal consolations with which so compassionate a Father as God tempers his anger.

Against all this the Atheist lays in the ballance a stupefaction of conscience and all religious Principles, as the only Expedient for that sullen resolution he so much admires and praises above that weakness of Spirit, brought in (saith he) by the unnecessary fears of a Justice, which do so intimidate and chill the Spirits of men; and that it may be a perfect counterpoise, he magnifies this braver freedom, that takes the mind off from the rack and torture of an amazed conscience. But he considers not, that this is a comfort proper for him only that desires there should be no God, that is altogether indisposed to seek him, and uncertain of him, notwithstanding all the assurances he is pleased to give of himself.

The first choice of every man must needs be, There should be a God, and he should be his Friend. For who

would be without the care and bounty of so rich a Being in amity with him? But when a man finds a mutual enmity betwixt God and him, his second choice may be, there should be none; yet when he understands him willing to be reconciled upon conditions of repentance, he will return to his first choice, who is not bewitched with the love of his sins, the renounce of which is so necessary a term of his peace. In the present case, a mans first election will be, not to be racketted at adventure by evil; but that it should be governed by one so holy and merciful as God is: but when he perceives an eternal Justice brought over him by this wish, he will desire to reverse it, and that any hand rather then such a one should hold him in these cords; one, that though it sports first in his misery, will at last conclude him in a death senseless of pain. From this desperate volition, he is lastly recovered by the grace of the Gospel, that disarming all evil of its sting, allays present horror with everlasting kindness to him that repents and believes. He then only that dares not
trust,

trust, and is resolved not to reform, is the fit Patient for this Physitian of no value. But yet alas, these things are no mans choice, nor hath he a vote, whether they shall be or no. He hath only a moment, in which he can seem to give them a Being in his own thoughts, or annihilate them: yet still they are, whether he will or no, even now. He finds them here, he doth not make them, nor can undo them. Mountains are not removed by a breath, nor do dreams of opinion take away solid things; but themselves are dissolved and pressed into nothing by them. He is conveyed in a phantastick peace to an eternal misery, that believes there is no God nor Justice; and is healed for a minute, at the price of a never ending horror, that shuts his eyes against those most wholesome Principles. All opinions contrary to which, are the intoxication of the Soul, and not the true ease of it. Lastly, is so much possible as this? that a man should baffle his own mind in that, wherein it is of the sense of all the world, by those private opinions which he is always begging of him-

himself to believe, but cannot prevail, except he have first seared himself by obduration in sin. It being much a more expedite Method to destroy the sense of an avenging hand that way, then by arguments of reason, which cannot but be a friend to truth, though tortured against it : Even as the mind considering against a God, is the more surpris'd with the sense of one, through the contrarietys of the principle. A serious debate lets in more water then can be pumped out, while the wicked man arguing for a God and his distributions of Justice, unawares loses his own Principles by unholy practices ; so that Atheism stands in need of wickedness to support it : but let it call to any other, if they will answer it ; or to which not only of the Saints, but even of the Sages in Morality will it turn ?

Thus the speculative and practick Atheist edifie one another : for while the speculative lays the best foundation for the practick (since nothing can make wickedness so reasonable as this confidence, There is no God or Justice) on the other side, the practick gives the
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greatest credibility to the speculative ; for nothing draws the Being of God, or his retributions into greater question, than a bold wicked life. But while they thus uphold each other , they also pull down themselves in one another. For many of those that deny God by their actions, profess to abhor the Principle that protects them ; and many of those that owne the Principle , joyn in condemning much of the practice that grows so naturally from it.

But all this while , true conscience and secret sense in mans Soul , hearkens neither to *Pilate* or *Herod* , when they fall out, or when they agree ; but converses oft so busily with its own fears, that the torment of suspicion (as it frequently happens) exceeds what the Atheist charges upon the full apprehension and belief of a God , and infinitely more, if taken in with all its advantage : where then is the good of Atheism ?

4. The notable circumstances of Judgments so tim'd with sins, and counterparting them , do as plainly declare a Justice , as when among men offenders

ders are executed in the very place where their crimes were committed; and with such Characters of their offence, that every man may know they were on purpose designd; that their sin might be read in their punishment. Thus *Adonibezek* acknowledged a retaliation in the hand of God upon him; *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Belsazzar* were taken in the very act of their pride and presumption against God. No less are all Histories full of the same instances; so that the Historians, though senseless of God and his Justice according to the Scriptures, have pointed to the Divine hand, and taken notice how express it was in marking the sins of men by his righteous Judgment upon them.

These are not indeed so general, as never to be otherwise; but given as Indexes of that Justice that is always the same, however it appears severally: Even as the Formalities and Ceremonies used by several Nations in their punishments, make no difference in the main.

If therefore the force of this reason be avoided, because other acts of Judgment

ment have no apparent affinity with the sins punished by them; and it is thence concluded, those that have, are but the flourishes of Chance, wherein it counterfeits discretion, as Nature sometimes dissembles Art: let it be thus reinforced. First there is no doubt, the consciences of men lead them to many more instances then can be publicly observed; but those that are of open notice, are both so many and so fair, as to satisfy them that have a reverent sense of God and his Judgments, and to admonish, even to inexcusableness, the more prophane, attacking their consciences, whether they will or no.

But further it is to be considered, God doth not force Religion upon mens minds, but offers them fair inducements and reasons, that it may be a matter of choice and not of necessity; so that good men have that hold of the assurances of it they desire, and which do abundantly settle their minds; and all have that which is sufficient to convince, and therefore to condemn them in their refusals.

That which knows its own authority
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and Truth, submits not it self to the use of vulgar importunacy ; but offering to every one enough , leaves men to their choice. He that is wise, is wise for himself : but whoso scorneth , he alone shall bear it. No man can in the thing it self, either advantage or indamage Religion. Besides, the supreme operations of Grace always remain to that most blessed Spirit , whose inspirations are more free then the wind ; and his penetrations more intimate to the Soul then it self ; without which even miracles themselves dazzle without perswading : and how far a man perverse and obstinate will withstand God in his most forcible Sieges of Judgment , is most evident in *Pharaoh*. It is no wonder then, if those who are not so plyed with these Arguments, say, Who is the Lord ?

God generally carries things upon such a line , that there never want those mirrors wherein he may be seen by quick and humble eyes ; and yet they are so tempered, that prejudications of men, either through lust, prophaneſs, or vain opinion, see him not in the clearest of them. Those

Those things which present times are worthily earnest in asserting as undoubted verities, that they might demonstrate the reasonableness of our Religion (*viz.* the miracles done by *Moses*, *Christ*, and his *Apostles*) were as certain to multitudes of the Age then present, as sense could make them, and yet not enough to perswade. The little Fragments of History we so carefully gather up from those Heathens that writ synchronically with the Evangelists, to give evidence by to some matters of Fact, were unnecessary to them who had broad light to discover the whole series of things, and yet were unconverted; which shews Religion is carried in a stream of Grace and Divine Illumination, wafting the Soul that is meek, and him that feareth God, into the secret of his Covenant; while these outward manifestations are fit Channels for it to run in, though they convey nothing effectually to unprepared Souls.

It is not then necessary, there should be just such a measure of this kind of palpable assurance an Atheistick Wit de-

demands; nor would it do with him, who is not perswaded by *Moses* and the Prophets, that is by such an assurance of the evidence of things, as God in Wisdom and Goodness metes out to men, giving still more and more to him that soberly improves; but taking from him who repines at the littleness of what he hath, and neglects it, even that which he hath.

CHAP. IV.

A Solution offered to the several Objections against this Position, That Judgments are from God.

IT is an observation of old, a little knowledge of Nature makes men swollen with sudden conceit, Atheists; but a deep and accurate insight into things, surprises them with the clearness and evidence of a Deity. Men having plaid a while upon the surface of things, and leaping off from them, conclude hastily against a Providence, while those that are patient, and leisurely consider, see even greatest reason for it, there where

where Triflers pitch against it: Contentious minds that will not obey the truth, nor can be quiet in any of the sagest Principles, fasten in the softest places, that give some little entrance to bold cavil; but they that search deeper, find solid Rock there.

Wits that think themselves never high enough, except they are advanced upon the ruines of all sound Maximes, and have that under their feet, which others wear as a Crown upon their heads, dispute against them, till they are thrown off with scorn and shame by the evidence of unmoveable truth and certainty, that cannot be unfixed by a breath; but though these winds and waves beat, yet the house they conceit fallen, stands, and great is the standing of it; while they themselves are wasted into nothing, but a bluster of vanity, and the foam of their own shame, and at length harried by the Whirlwind into utter darkness.

But let us weigh the objections of greatest confidence against our assertion of Gods Primacy in Judgments.

Object. 1. The evils we call Judgments,
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ments, are apparently carried in a course of Nature.

Ans. 1. It cannot be denied, but that Judgments are, and may be traced up to their natural causes; as Pestilences to the corruption of Air, inequality of Seasons; Famines to excessive either Moisture or Drought, or other apparent reasons; Wars to ambition of Princes, dissoluteness of Governments, populousness of Nations forced to transplant themselves, with innumerable the like, which seem to obscure God and his highest Ordination. But how far is this upon a serious debate from retrenching it in the least? Are not natural causes set on work in the terriblest executions among men? and yet no one is so senseless as to question whether they are punishments, or things did so conspire? As well when a *Ravaillac* dyes in the Tormentors hand, may it be supposed there was no Justice intended; but Nature fell in upon him. Or how doth this lessen God more then earthly Princes?

Nay indeed it exalts God, that he sits in his Chair, and yet orders all things.

things. Nature goes on in its own course, the wills of men move in their proper freedom, and contingencies hover up and down in their fluid air, and all bring about his justest ends, and carry with them his righteous determinations against sinners. Is not God much the greater, that things come to pass stillly, and without noise of miracle, that he comes not in this sense out of his place, *viz.* the settled state of things, every time he punishes; and yet when he pleases to punish with a Divine grandeur, miracles of vengeance are alike easie to him?

Some things go slowly on, and at length come to those points, where they determine in unhappiness to man. These finishing their course, and treading their circles within such a time, or near it, are by observation deprehended in their motion, and expected, yea almost known like the stages of the heavenly bodies. As Contagions have been observed to make their return within such a term; under no very unlike calculation have fallen the peace of Nations, the periods of Empires; though to some

of these are allowed Ages for their revolution ; as among the Stars there be some said to claim no less ; others start suddenly out of the bosom of their hidden causes, and fall with an unsuspected violence upon mankind ; but both are alike under the cognisance of God, and subject to his jurisdiction. Known to God are all his works from the foundation of the world, and the whole plot of things, with all their interferences, lye before him ; even the planetary motions of mens wills are descryed of old.

The things that rise up successively to us, are one moment to him. It is no wonder then, that Judgments should fall perpendicularly upon sins, though they move never so punctually in Natures path. For the one (*viz.* sin) suppose never so naked a permission of it ; yet it must be fore-seen, because of that permission : for all that God permits, he hath decreed from all Eternity to permit. The other (*viz.* his Judgments) are not only fore-seen, but ordered upon such sins fore-seen ; how exact then may the placing of the one be

be with the other; and to him that calleth things that are not, as if they were, be a perfect act of Judgment? And to us who see things, not in the shell of those elderly causes we now discourse of, but take notice of them only as they are hatched into execution; they first appear as extemporary sentences of Judgment upon the present occasion: But observing more nearly, and being more sagacious about them, we find the evils that press us have a settled progress, and were fixed upon some causes, that being further off to us, were not so soon espied; but that the evils we commit, are, after all our examination, found to be of a sudden and accidental kind of birth and growth, of a much latter edition to the Judgments we thought ordered against them, which were on their way, though at a great distance before the sins were committed: and therefore we conclude, they cannot be Judgments, seeing it is unreasonable, punishments should be preparing for an offence not yet done; but they only happened to meet together: for if such sins, as we supposed,

posed, they came to revenge, had never been committed ; yet these effects being risen already, and sprung from their principles, would have come to their ends. But helped by a sounder reason, inlightned by the Word of God, we find the sins were as early in the foresight of God, though his infinite purity can be no way the Author of them, as the progresses of Nature, which come directly out of his hand.

Further we might add, if this were not full, Sins are so always in motion, that it is no injustice preparations of punishment should be so too ; and how far Nature may be hastned, or retarded to serve God, is very unknown to us, who are admitted at the most but to the Anti-rooms of Providence, but kept off from the presence ; and may look into the outer Ware-houses of Nature, but are secluded from the Shop and retired Work-houses, where things are set forward and backward without our privity.

Those Judgments, the executions of which the wills of men are subordinated to, are of the same, and in this last

last particular of a clearer account. For whether they are those that require a tract of time to accomplish them, as the leisurely dissolution of States through daily degeneracy of manners, opening the way, and inviting foreign violences, or breeding intestine dissensions, where the sin and the punishment grow in wreaths and links one with another (for all wickedness carries weakness of counsel along with it, and is in tendency to ruine) or whether they are sudden storms, that through some unexpected accident rose up; yet they that allot God the strictest Government over the wills of men, and tie up his Prerogative closest, will allow him to call for a ravenous bird out of the East, and to hiss for the flye beyond the River; that is, he can summon on the sudden, or with more leisure dispose the minds of men to such actions, that while their own projects are all they feel or know of, yet his just wrath upon those against whom they come, lies secretly hid; and unknown to them passes on with them; and though they think themselves excited only by

themselves, and the considerations about them; yet there is a spring out of their reach, and deeper then their fathom.

Ans. 2. Though we acknowledge these things natural in this sense, that they arise from the collisions of Nature with it self in its ordinary agencies, or the interpositions of one thing with another, so that the efficiencies of it are remitted, or intended to the detriment of some others, and which are to a considerable degree of satisfaction known to those that industriously search Nature; Yet in truth these evils we call natural, are rather the errors and defects, the cruelties and unkindnesses of it, then the true intentions and just motions of it, if it be that universal mother and soft bosom of all things.

And therefore it is worthy inquiry, how it comes to be an adversary to it self; for it would have minded in all things the perfection of it self, in the whole, and every particular, if there had not been a feud-raised by the Author of it, in revenge of sin, and enmity infused into one thing against another.

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It will be hard to give any account of these destructive acts of Nature, so easie to our thoughts as this of God displeased with sins, and punishing transgressors by them.

That which may give some relief to the enemies of Providence herein, *viz.* That the good of the Universe is secured by the disadvantage of particulars, on which occasion we see in all things Nature yields ground from it self, shall be considered in a distinct place.

Ans. 3. To him that believes Scripture, it is undoubted, the Judgments of God have often set Nature into a higher Orbe of motion then its own, at other times stupified it, taken it off its wheels, and laid it lower then it self. He hath turned, and even chased it hither and thither, out of its own path, and as it were amazed it with its unlikeness to it self; and how often he doth so still, though not in such an eminency, we may without discredit to the knowingness of any Age, call in question, whether there be so much either natural or political knowledge as is necessary to make a certain state of the case;

case ; Famines and Pestilences wholly out of the road of Nature , a Deluge of water, and storm of Fire, that if it had been left to it self, had been utterly unknown ; Invasions, Captivations, and Slaughters, that had not God animated, had lain still to this day.

These things are indeed preserved in Sacred Records (as is most reasonable) and the memory of them laid up in the Temple ; yet the power that patrated them, is not without witness in common story.

Object. 2. It is observed, these calamities befalling Nations light so indifferently upon all times and places, that they seem not at all to chuse them, or to have any conduct particularly to them ; and therefore they are a meer chance that happeneth to all alike, or Nature turning it self about in its own circle ; else the worst times and places would be singled out.

Ans. 1. It hath been already noted, that the greatest ruines and vastations have, by the observation of those that have delivered over the memory of them to after-times, been assigned to the

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the wickedness and impieties then raging ; who have therefore concluded the Justice of God prepared those destructions for them as so corrupted and guilty. But in Scripture it is so evident, that we never read of any Judgment foretold, or in the execution ; but the sins that demerited, are signified with it. In that progress or general visitation *Amos* foretold, it is still inserted, For three transgressions and four.

2. Besides the sins that are in the way of every observation, in those times or Nations upon which Judgments come ; it is easily acknowledgable, that many sins are of a more secret and retired nature, as being concealed in those deep vaults that wickedness seeks for it self : *Achans* wedge troubled that time, as well with the unknownness of the cause of such an overthrow, as with the thing it self. These retirements of sin all-seeing Justice espies.

Many that are not own'd for evil, through darkness and error of conscience, as the Heathen Idolatries, Persecutions, the Jews Crucifixion of Christ ; which he that understands his
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own Holiness, Laws, and sins committed against them so exactly, cannot pass by. Lastly, sins that are out-dated to any but the Eternal Righteousness, to which all things are present, and therefore it requires that which is past to us, and entails the punishment with the guilt of former times upon impenitent posterity. The Famine in *David's* time revenged the cruelties of *Saul* dead, and did not remove, till the sin spread upon the whole by connivence, was gathered into his Family, and punished there. By which we may understand, God sees the secret veins of guilt, upon which his Righteousness falls, which only he knows, before whom Hell is naked, and destruction hath no covering.

3. If any would in the general challenge God of injustice and male-administration, or no administration, because he doth not always remark the worst times, but transfers his Judgments out of those in which the sins were committed into others, which they think is to misplace them: or lastly, because secret and particular sins draw misery on the
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Publick, which they conceive distant from that so even Righteousness of God, who will not set the Childrens teeth on edge, because the Fathers have eaten sowre Grapes; nor strike an innocent person, because a guilty one (whose offence too he knows not) stands by him: let them consider, There are no times, places, or persons so innocent, as to make them an argument: For there are several ways by which sins derive, and propagate themselves, and so justifie the translation of punishments (which supposed, as it must be) the Dominion the great Ruler of the world hath before him, vindicates him from imputations of wrong, even while he laughs at the tryal of the seeming or comparative innocent; or without any reason accountable to us, singles out this or that Age of a world always guilty and liable to his Justice, and makes it chronicular, and exemplary for the punishments of sin upon it. Is it fit to say to a King, Thou art wicked? or to Princes, Ye are ungodly? how much less to him that accepteth not their persons, though never so great; but

but striketh them openly in the sight of others.

Ignorant people afford a blindfold compassion to all they find in the hand of humane Justice ; and those that appear wiser, are touched with the same weakness, if their crimes are not as plain as they would have them, not considering those reasons Justice and Government together inforce upon the powers that have so adjudged them ; and are therefore bold to reproach them with want of righteousness and mercy: greater folly and presumption do they betray, who impeach him whose goodness and mercy being equal with his strength and Sovereignty, are all infinite ; yet not to be measured by Rules proper to finity, even as his Eternity can be comprehended by no standards of time, to whom a thousand years, of so great account with us, are but as one day ; and lastly, that light he dwells in so inaccessible, that searching all things it oppresses audacious inquiries into it self. From whence we may much rather, in all cases of doubt, conclude our darkness in our selves, then no Providence

dence or Justice in God ; yet let us with reverence and godly fear see how far the designation of Judgment upon some particular Age, that can say, Our Fathers have sinned , and are not , and we bear their iniquities , may be set right to our thoughts by the weights and beam of a humane Justice applied to them : And when we consider all punishments in this world are commensurate to the continuance of it in such a state as we see it set , we shall find a necessity , that the infliction should fall upon some parts of time , and not on others, lest the whole become like Hell and eternal punishment ; instead of which, God is now pleased to use a kind of decimation as men do , where an execution upon all is not to be practised. Nor is it unequal to that Age upon which the blow falls, seeing latter times make one body with those that went before ; Monarchies with the Progenitors and Posterity are united in their consideration , as the parts with the whole : why then should it be strange, that God should order the guilt and punishment of elder Ages to glide down upon

upon the descendents of them, as well as those advantages of wealth and greatness, purchased at that very rate by their Ancestors, that the inheritance of all should be conveyed together? Nor is it hard, when the measure of a Nations sin is as one common vessel, which they that go before, with them that come after, have filled together, and it grows full, that the unhappy generation that crowns it, should receive the Antistioichon or countermeasure of Judgments; which Doom yet is by a just interpretation placed upon the whole; and in ordinary discourse referred to it; for who seeing posterity miserable, doth not call to mind the sins of Forefathers, so far as they know them, & acknowledge them punished in their Childrens ruine? And if the proceeding were not in this manner, there must be a quite different state of the world. All which will be clearer, when we come to the variety God uses in administering Judgments.

Object. 3. In those times and places which have been the resort of these evils, they have fallen promiscuously and

and adventurously upon all ; or have missed the worst men , lighting upon the less nocent ; or at least have been apparently ruled by the course of Nature, or contingency. Men who exceed others, as much in licentiousness of evil, as they do in condition and greatness, are generally most secure. Good men fall with the multitude , without distinction of their virtue. All which little comports with so wise and a holy a Government , as we establish by calling the dispose of evils, Judgments.

Ans^r. Besides what we have already said to clear this, and shall hereafter be spoken ; the replication we chuse at this time, shall consist in these following Particulars.

1. The terrour that spreads it self universally, while Judgments are executing, is no inconsiderable degree of a Judgment, even upon those that are not yet struck. For if every death makes some impression upon the spectators, though in health, because they carry the same mortality about them ; much more when deaths are linked, and danger flies every way, like chain-shot,

cutting off many together. They that are conscious to themselves of the same capacities of evil, tremble every moment, and their life hangs in doubt before them; which God himself ranks among the forest of afflictions upon men.

Thus God communicates his wrath, and strikes more than those upon whom his hand comes: The very report and sound of their stroke and fall, being a vexation and punishment upon others. The passing of the grounded staff raises a general out-cry and lamentation: For though some are so secure, as to be touched only in themselves, for whom some worse thing is provided; yet doth not their more than usual obduracy take off from the force of this consideration, any more than particular exceptions invalidate a general Rule. The Thunderbolt that falls but in one place, astonishes and shakes round about with the terrour, violent motion, and roar of it; from whence they that in such evils seem most secure, are but upon their parol, and daily compounding for their safety, put upon often flights and
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continual fears ; which are at least great drops of that shower, which comes indeed in more abundance upon some, but lessens every ones impunity.

2. 'Tis incredible how great the circulation of Judgments is ; those which begin at the feet, or meaner parts of a Nation, insensibly climb up to the head ; there being unknown Sympathies in the civil, as well as natural body. God therefore threatens a whole Nation with those evils that fall especially upon some parts ; when he wounds in the head, it is generally fatal to the whole ; when he looses the girdle of Princes, and takes away Counsellors, *Jerusalem* is ruined ; when he strikes in the lower parts, yet it is reciprocated by Principalities and Powers, as *David* felt the stroke of that destroying Angel that directed it self upon the people : God therefore uses a vicissitude, sometimes taking one, sometimes another, when yet he minds the affliction of all ; for he that can disperse his punishments by making one the fountain of them to the rest, is not at all liable to suspicions of partiality, any more then that Justice

accused as lame, that passes upon one member of a man, and yet intends the whole man.

3. Very often the Judgments of God are sweeping, and in the Prophets phrase, cut off root and branch, and so deprive of all possible scruple; of which there are so many dreadful monuments, as to make this a very feeble cavil of those who mind not so much the satisfaction of their reason, as they delight in a slavery to their own Hypothesis. But as God sometimes resolved to take away the use of some prophane Proverbs, and scandalous to his truth or goodness, by the severity and presentaneousness of his Judgments; so doth he often by the same means silence many of the objections made against his supreme hand in them: yet a fuller answer of this turning to every side of it, is still intended.

Object. 4. Many of those Fatalities we call Judgments, are but necessary methods for the continuation of the world in that succession, wherein it is now settled. It must be so, one generation goeth, that another may come; it

is no more then the sowing of the seed, that first dyes, that it may rise in the greater flourish : And at some times more haste must be made, then by the leisure of ordinary dying, that supernumeraries may be disburdened, who would else increase too great a charge upon the Earth.

Ans^w. If we take it for granted, that daily mortality (which we enter not into the account of Judgments) will not take off the too great burden of mankind's increase, and make that room in the world so necessary for succession; and that therefore none of the vital blood and spirits of a Nation are let out in great mortalities and slaughters, to weaken and impair it; but that they give advantage to the surviving part: yet it will not come home to the objectors purpose. For whatever we set in the throne of things, Nature, or but Chance, that it should do so much well, and either not have contrived a sweeter translation of things, or as luckily, as in other things, have happened upon it, is enough to give an overthrow to this whole supposition. But to us that ac-

knowledge and humbly adore God, it cannot be thought that he should govern, and bring to pass ends with the grief and unhappiness of his innocent Creatures, who could with the same ease to his Divine power and wisdom, and more agreeable to that goodness, have administred them with all the mildness and clemency in which that richest Being delights it self. But things carried so different hereunto, argue as high as may be, the sense of a Judgment: That God should make room in the world by the hurries of men out of it, which might have been as well by a gentler transplantation: that he should change seasons by the ministries of storms and tempests, and shew the wonderful events of his Providence by flashes of Lightning, and Blazing-stars, which would have been as clearly understood by the kinder beams of his goodness, assures us he is necessitated by his righteousness and justice to transact by ways strange to him, and in which he hath no pleasure; and therefore puts them into such a frame, that they may at once discover his

his Attributes and Counsels with that wrath and severity that have their only display upon the sins of men. Thus the iniquity of the *Amorites* fall moved God by so dreadful a displacing of them to give the inheritance to *Israel*, wherein his Bounty to one fell in with his Justice upon the other; the former of which, infinite understanding could have carried in another Channel; had there not been righteous reasons for the latter also. The Jews infidelity introduced the Adoption of the Gentiles upon their own rejection; which yet was so little necessary otherwise, that their reconciliation will be as life from the dead.

CHAP. V.

The discussion of this Scruple, How can it stand with the Author of Nature to disorder it?

BECAUSE the wrath of God in his Judiciary Acts, is, as we have observed, so often discovered in the irregular moves of Nature, which is guided

by an intelligence extern to it self; and so can commit no offence; and this intelligence is no lower then that which created it; so that no error can be charged upon Creatures, with which nothing was supremely intrusted, but must be ascribed to God originally: It may add much to the clearness of what hath been so earnestly asserted of his hand in all the evils that are in the world, to discourse the reasonableness of his administration, when he unravels in displeasure that order of the Creation he hath with so wise and skilfull a hand composed, and interrupts the chain of things himself hath interwoven, upon occasion of the sins of men, lest it should seem dishonourable to his goodness and unchangeable counsel, if he chuses so; or derogatory to his wisdom & power, if he is so necessitated. For whenever sinful disorders provoke him to disanul or confuse those things wherein he hath shewed himself so wise, something suitable befalls his works, to that *Solomon* complains of as one of the greatest grievances of humane Nature in its acquests, and that
made

made him go about to despair of all his labour, *viz.* That a foolish Son arises and dissipates that state of things the wisdom of his Father transmitted to him with beauty and splendour. To the resolution of this, will be most conducing the loosing of the doubts that arise from the constant weakness, debility, and incompleteness of things to their ends, their frequent aberrations, and miscarriages from them; which advantageously solved, will contribute much light to this case of Judgments.

Let us then search the original order of the world, and see how fairly the disorder of it, either general, or more extraordinary in time of Judgments, agrees with the goodness and providence of God, and is reconciled with the glory of the first Creation.

I. When things were in their primordial state, set into such a posture, that at the same time they expressed the bounty and wisdom of the Creator, and their amity one with another; man stood at the head of them, in whose happiness they conspired, and paid him their several tributes, as to a native Prince:

Prince: They rejoyced in his Glory and Grandeur, receiving from him the honour of a near alliance, and bowed to him with humblest obedience, as fit to command them, through the excellency of a high-born spirit. They all in their several degrees of Being were disposed, as one common ear, to take the sound of mans contentment, which rebounded from Heaven to Earth; and the Eccho so conveyed, that it took hold of both ends of the Creation at once. The Heavens hearing the Earth, the Earth the Corn and Wine, and all, Man. The Heavens send him down their sweetest and kindest influences; The Earth breathed nothing upon him but innocent; The Clouds most liberal of their fruitfullest distillations, and the Earth an open bosom of its own riches to this lower Angel, who being a Spirit placed in a body, hath the opportunity of ~~tasting~~ the pleasures arising from them. Thus all things were created with an aspect upon man, and for his sake ordered into their several classes, and prepared to their various motions; wherein we cannot indeed but cry out, What is man that thou

thou art mindful of him? But who could
 challenge God for it, whose counsels
 and influences are all his own, and all
 the whole imaginary space out of him,
 Nothing? What then could implead
 God out of its nothing; for doing what
 he pleases with his own? Man being thus
 the center wherein the Sovereign good-
 ness of God, and the service of all things
 met (for in him their series and happy
 order ended) his obedience to God
 was made the security of his condition,
 wherein was intrusted his own welfare
 and the blessing of the whole Creation.
 For while all things were so fixed, that
 they could chuse no other state then
 their own, man having the sum of free-
 will in himself, to use it for the good of
 himself and all the Creatures under
 him, by continuing in his duty to God
 (the knot wherein all was infolded)
 what wonder is it, if when he by trans-
 gression lost his own station, for whose
 advantage all things stood in their first
 and most beautiful order; they also
 run out of their ranks, and joyn in the
 confusion he is to be punished by? For
 they run not with such an exorbitancy,
 but

but that they pay as great an honour to the wisdom of God, united with his Justice, as they first did to the same wisdom in conjunction with goodness, and that service to his indignation, that they had done to his bounty. For which reason the effect of this also points just upon man. For what Creature hath so quick a sense of, and pain in the disorder as he? or upon whom doth the malignancy fall equally as upon him, to whose ruine the world it self, had without further patience run, had not the Grace of God, intending a restauration to that fallen Nature, staid the precipitation? Hence things are kept so near the rule and tune to which they were at first set, that there remain fair prints of their former exactness in themselves, and humble amicableness to man, together with the admonitions of his lapsed state; which are so intermingled, that they give luster to each other: but so still, that they are at a minutes warning, and in a moment take a Divine Allarm to rise up against sinful man, with the executions of his wrath, in what degrees he pleases (even to the

turn-

turning themselves into a general flame at last, to which they are reserved by him) and whereunto they were at first upon supposition of sin equally prepared.

Now in all this, there is as august a presence of wisdom, and as great an understanding in the displays of it self, though severe to man in his disobedience ; as great a beauty and order of Justice, as there was of Mercy. The night hath its Graces, though in black shades, and the glories that inlighten it. There is an order in storms, and a rule in the bloody battles ; a declaration of God in Judgments, as well as in acts of bounty.

Nor is it any change in God, but an even counsel, that in his favour is life and peace ; but rebellion against him is pursued with disappointment and misery : And what can be more natural then that Nature it self should leave its own place, to serve the Creator that fixed it there, or turn out of its way, when the more primitive paths of it lead not to his ends ? Or what more unnatural, then that the Lord of all should

should be disserved? Or what more orderly way of punishment, then that those Creatures should rise up against man, that were made for his service, when he sinned against the common Sovereign of him and themselves? and that sinning, he should find his unhappiness just in that place, where his contentment in his obedience rested?

2. This outward world or state of things was tuned to an inward, more excellent and immaterial world, constituted of Holiness and Righteousness, standing in communion with God, and conformity to him: The perfection and highest glory of it was indeed in Heaven, and the center of it Eternity, where God and blessed Spirits under him inhabite. But it pleased infinite goodness to give an example of it also in a visible and material world, and to set it floating in time, that after an experiment made, he might again unite it to himself in Eternity.

The great exactness, curious frame, and order of the outward world, was a transparency for that unspotted purity from above to shine through. The eye
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prepared to read the Laws, and behold the Divine Beauty, and in whom the intellectual image it self resided, [was man; who therefore is created similar to it; a Soul enriched with knowledg, righteousness, and true holiness, sparkling through an innocent, inoffensive, and unspotted body, that while with his mind he adores that supreme and original goodness, and conforms to it with greatest pleasure; he may withal delightfully contemplate that wisdom and righteousness as it were incarnate in the several Creatures, and visible in their beauty, order, and peace, wherein they stand united one to another.

This Divine likeness in which man himself was made, was the life, and all below him a beautiful shadow, which received its continuance and liveliness from the purity, and flourish of that heavenly life preserved in him. By sin he quenches this Divine spark, sinks below himself, and betrays the whole excellency of the Creation depending upon him. Thus great personages held up by the grace of the Prince, shining upon their loyalty, spread their beams, not
only

only upon their real dependents, but give honour to their effigies: But falling by treason, all the marks of honour they derived, are defaced, and their very representations, though insensible, partake their guilt and degradation. Man deposed from that excellency of Gods image, a cloud covers all about him; the order and peace are dissolved, and flye in pieces, and the whole becomes a black shade, in which his sin and fall are drawn: That Soul that first shone through, is now imprisoned in its own body, and looking out at the grates, sees the dreadful likeness of its impurity: The body (and Soul by it) feels those pains and disorders that arise first through the jars and violences of things in tumult and conflict with themselves, and rushing upon it; then through the want of that supply and service, caused by the interruption and discontinuance of the line of things that run up to man. These are also daily brought within, in those strifes that fall out among the humours, the continual trepidations of a healthful state, constant propensities, and at last putrefaction in death.

death. All which are a sensible history of sin and Apostacy from God, unlikeness to him, and disinterest in him; as the former was of holiness and a state of favour. Thus falls the glory of the outward world in the ruine of this inward, that was the Spirit and Soul of it. In all which there is nothing unbecoming the stability or fore-sight of that Counsel, that first contrived things. For when the integrity and perfection of the image of God in man was broken, and all other beauty, but an ensample of it, as it stood in him; why should the transcription be kept fair, as an honour to him, who had unworthily betrayed the Original? But even according to the first design, the deformity rushing in with the first treason, was to be drawn upon the very same tables that were thus embellished in resemblance of, and as a dignity to humane Nature; or seeing the glory of the Creation was a reflection from the Eternal light, that first descending upon man with strongest rays, was from him with a fainter splendour to rebound upon the lower region of the

Creatures; when these rays were so withdrawn, that his day was turned into night, it must needs be dark with them also. Lastly, how could the punishment of man be more equally laid, then in the confusing those things, the order of which was prepared for his glory, and as an act of Grace to him, and wherein his pleasure and fruition, as a Creature of this world, consisted; when he himself was so unlovely, and instead of a delight, grown an object of repentance to God?

But everlasting brightness that dawned upon man in a Mediator, ere it set in a total privation, continued much of the primæve glory to all things as to their fundamental state; yet the cloudy condition of mankind between his own fall and recovery by Christ, is exemplified by the waving motion of all the creatures about him, while the constant pravity of his Nature is counterparted by as settled a vanity and vexation of spirit; and the more prodigious distortions of common Nature, are the characters and descriptions of greater violations of these Laws of righteousness anew instamped upon man. For

For God having a greater regard to this inward world, the world spiritual, whereof we especially speak; he accounts the things we are amazed at, little, in comparison of those more monstrous, our sins, which are hideouslest convulsions, more portentous then Comets and Earthquakes. If then one Iota or tittle of the Law be of a more awful establishment then Heaven and Earth, what strange thing is it, if in its revenge we see Nature loose it self, if we hear of Nations and Kingdoms torn up, and dispersed? For all order of Nature and peace of Nations, being but a case of these more material things; it is no wonder they are made nothing of, when what they are servants to is perished and lost. But that God intends all visible and sensible composure of things should wait upon the condition of the spiritual and invisible, is yet more evident, in that the final resolution of all things produces the perfection of the less by the greater; when righteousness advanced to the height shall dwell in new Heavens and a new Earth, prepared for it, and the spirits of just men

made perfect inhabit incorruptible and immortal bodies, made like his glorious body : Then wickedness having finished it self, shall be sealed up into a lake of unmixed misery, which is so great a remove from God, that as sin, it was never created by him, or of primitive intention, but a secondary ordination against sin that intruded it self upon the works of God.

From all this that hath been said, appears the uniformity of the ways of God with themselves, whenever he most reverses those natural sanctions. For if without any derogation from them, he so early admitted upon the first constitution such an allay of the excellency of it, and so many cross lines of motion to the truly native settlement, and into such a fixedness, that they are now grown natural, from whence death and affliction are companions with life and comfort, balancing and poising one another ; it is less of wonder, that upon greater rebellions and persistencies in sin, God concedes his Justice and wrath a larger scope upon this second state, in which
he

he hath at the least shared things between prosperity and adversity.

When men transgress the Laws, change Ordinances, break the Everlasting Covenant, we may well expect this more fluctuating and precarious state of Nature should with greater freedom be rolled up and down, and removed from it self. And if at last that Covenant of day and night, and those Ordinances of Heaven will resign themselves, waiting till those greater then they be vindicated, and restored to their full authority by an universal Judgment ; and if all the Creatures are willing to be passed through that fire that is to purge evil wholly down into its own draught, they will now undoubtedly even surrender themselves to be made use of to the sooner purposes of vengeance upon wicked men, as the Creator pleases ; whereby they have a prefatory redemption from that vanity and corruption wherein they are infolded, not willingly : for they earnestly expect the time of a full deliverance, and proportionably now they even lift up their heads to that vindication,

tion they find in a partial Judgment,

CHAP. VI.

A general Account, That there are several Reasons of Judgments comporting with Gods holy and good Government of the World.

HAVING thus far in general endeavoured to shew the reasonableness of Judgments, upon consideration of their agreeableness with the first state of things, as also with the second settlement in such a poise between prosperity and adversity, as we find them: let us yet further, and more particularly search those great Principles upon which these dreadful ways of God move themselves, when the scale in which unhappiness and misery lye, is pressed down below the equality we now call Nature (though it be not pure and perfect Nature) For they will convey us most happily into those rules of practice, by which we may either prevent, remove, or suffer them with greatest advantage: A wise sense of them will enable a man
to

to conspire with the infinite understanding that inflicts them, and to accept the punishment ; by which he changes the nature of it to himself, while he votes with God against himself by the higher part of his Soul, and kisses the rod that afflicts him, adoring the righteousness, equity, and faithfulness of God in it, as *David* : I know that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. But he that sees not why he should be so used, hath nothing but a patience created of necessity to relieve him, if he be not brutishly senseless, and stupidly bears the knocks that fall on him, till he dyes under them, without any regard to the mind of him that sends them : we have therefore those accounts given us by God in his Word, that we may suffer as men.

That highest wisdom and goodness, though he treat in greatest severities with his rational Creatures, yet allows them the honour of being rational ; as great persons, though malefactors, are notwithstanding arraigned and condemned with more honourable ceremonies, and have a state in their death ;

even meaner persons in Governments humane, and remote from Tyranny, are not smothered and stifled in the dark, but by publick procedure reasoned into their condemnation.

It is very disagreeable to a Sovereign Righteousness, whose strength loveth Judgment; to that Creator that made man in his own image, to devote him to destruction, so much as in this world for his pleasure, or to give him up to any arbitrary spirits that would crush him, as men do vilest Creatures under them, for meer sport, or because they please to do so: so little is that conceit to be assented to, that makes such conjectures.

Yet is it not contrary to sound sense, that man losing God, and himself so far, that he casts off all fear of him, and even unsouls and dispirits himself through ignorance and sensuality, should be given up as the prey and spoil of those invisible powers, that being fallen from God, and become ignoble and degenerate, are used by him in such black ministeries, and make use (through that Divine permission) sometimes of
one

one instrument, sometimes of another for their cruelty. Such men are sunk, as it were too low, for the more honourable chastisements of God himself, or those blessed Spirits who serve him in his Judgments only out of zeal to his glory, never out of envy, or in compassion to mankind.

Thus some sort of profligate Rebels, who are not worthy of a serious Justice or noble pursuit, are by just and wise States deserted to be hunted, like beasts, by any that will, either for recreation or advantage; who are commonly the worst, that delight to be so employed.

But indeed we find the Scriptures always discoursing Gods dealings with men at a higher rate of esteem than this, and suing himself to all the moves against them, that they may be orderly and just, as if the Soul of man would reason and debate with him concerning his ways; for so indeed we find, there is a spirit in man, that in those that are good, humbly and reverently desires to plead with him, as in *Job* and *Jeremy*; and in evil men, contends and calumniates

niates him as unequal, till he convinces them of all their hard speeches against him.

And the comparison can never be equal betwixt man and any of the creatures under him ; for they melt away from the least pressure into death, and cease there : but man dated for Eternity, is therefore of a much higher consideration ; nor have the other those notions of right and wrong, of rewards for doing well, and punishments for ill doing, that are implanted in mans Soul. God therefore passes into all the cases of his rational Creatures, and determines upon them so, that he will not regret or offend those Principles which he himself hath put into them ; but in all his Judgments and tryals of them, he comprehends their right in his own, and so sentences them to misery, as that it could not be otherwise consistently with that Justice and Righteousness he is to declare. All which are not only argued here in the world, in the darkness and low state of Souls, and in this mixture of things, wherein a man cannot truly know love or hatred by any thing

thing that is before him; but in the clearness and open air of Eternity, when the spirits of men will be at their highest pitch, and multitudes of them aculeated with the sting of an endless doom; while other Creatures lye still in their dust, and covered in their ashes. These immortal Souls challenging out of rottenness their bodies rise up, & plead with the Almighty concerning themselves. From whence we infer, that God doth not willingly afflict the children of men so much as here, seeing it is he that hath put into them, and excites in them these powers of debate with himself; and those reasons upon which they argue; and he doth it, that he may be justified when he speaketh, and be clear when he judgeth, and that it may be known, that all he doth is, as we have said, upon accounts of Interest in his own glory, of sincerest intention for the good of his Creation, and of necessity for the righteous Government of the world. Of which accounts we shall treat particularly, having first laid down the fundamental reason of Judgments.

The

The primary reason of Judgments is to be found in close connexion with Justice and the nature of punishment. For Judgments upon a close description, are the executions of punishment according to rules of Justice. The essence of this Justice, is in the distribution of every ones right to them by an exact ballance of reward and punishment according to works, for the establishment of righteousness and order in the world, which are both the beauty and peace of it. The supreme care of this is in the hand of Original Righteousness and increate Justice, whose the world, and all the Creatures are, and which is ever awake upon this its Paramount Function.

The nature of punishment is found only in pain, without which we can have no possible notion of it; for it always imports to us something grievous. And it stands upon this reason.

Fruition and pleasure are the last ends in which the desires of man rest as his happiness; this is always his reach and contention, through what ways soever he steers himself: When he travels

vels through the mediums of honour or profit, or when he immediately grasps pleasure it self, or whether these be truly, or but apparently what he names them, the satisfaction arising from them is equally the design in all.

This pleasure or satisfaction is the tast or reflection of man upon the conveniency of things to his Nature, ministering delight through the mutual touch and embrace of them one with another, being thereto fitted by the wisdom and goodness of the Author of Nature.

This conveniency of things is called Good; the Fountain of it is God himself the First Good; the streams of it are derived from him upon the several Creatures which flow one among another.

True pleasure God hath by great skill woven into Holiness and gracious Action; these things being of themselves most accordant to mans Soul: and further, by an eternal and unchangeable constitution (which is the foundation of all propriety) set it as the reward of obedience to these Laws of Goodness; so that to him who perfectly observes them, the reward is reckoned
of

of debt ; that the mind considering first this pleasure springing from goodness, may be led to that as the root of it ; then understanding it as a reward apporportioned to virtuous actions, may be yet more fully invited thereunto.

The whole complex of Good is hereby assured both in the present accommodations of things to this life and state, and in the sum of it, eternal life : For godliness hath the promises of this life, and of that which is to come ; and they are rendred to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for honour, glory, and immortality, the paths of which lead to that fulness of Joy in the presence of God, and to those Rivers of pleasure at his right hand for evermore ; which are the most commensurate significations of Happiness.

On the other side, that which stands opposite to pleasure, as darkness to light, or death to life, is pain ; and it is the point from which the Fuga or aversion of the Soul hastens it with all vehemency. This we style Evil ; for
it

it is the disagreement of things to our Nature, which awakening resentment, causes greatest displeasure.

All this evil is by God seated in the heart of the evil of sin, where its proper habitation is ; for every impure action being dissonant to the true make of mans Soul, is as far from pleasure, rightly so called, as it is from goodness: and it is moreover prepared for the avenge of disobedience, as its due portion and reward : From whence both the rise of unhappiness is known, and the reason understood ; Death entred by sin, and the wages of sin is death, with all the preparations to it.

This evil of punishment is administered by the severe Touches of God himself as an adversary, or the unfriendly pressures of the Creatures upon our Nature, set on by his wrath, either in the degrees now, or that complement Scripture calls Hell, where is wailing and gnashing of teeth in utter darkness, or utter impossibility of enjoyment.

This constitution of things is the foundation of Religion, the pleasurable both fruit and remuneration of obe-

obedience, and the painful issue and recompence of transgression, being adapted to the inclining of the mind on each side of it ; and the more necessary , because through the wise disposition of things by God for the tryal of man, virtue is beset with present inconveniences (especially since our Fall) which deters the simple ; and on the other side, the entertainments of folly and sin have the sweetness of stollen waters , the inticement of Fools : but both these are counterballanced by the after and lasting rewards or punishments.

These things that are first proper to persons considered singly , spread (as men themselves do) and combine upon Nations and Communities : For that Justice we speak of, is not only as distinct as every man is to himself, but as large and general as the whole world, that Bodies of men may be awed with the same reasons that seem to have greater place upon particulars , and be either prosperous, and spend their days in pleasure ; or calamitous, and travelling always with pain, according to their conformities with the Laws of righteousness,

ousness, or prevarication from them.

Let this then be reduced to the present purpose. Justice always intent upon its high administration, observes the sins of men, passes sentence upon them, and is ready to execute it. The sentence upon sin is the intire sum of pain and misery, rolled up in that one commination of dying the death; the proportions, instruments, and seasons are chosen by that highest wisdom, that guides the dispensation of Justice, and the residue laid up in store for the last Judgment, when the wicked shall be turned into Hell; and the Nations that forget God.

From hence it is, that Judgments, the great vehicles of pain to the world, move up and down in it, by the appointment of Justice to enforce transgressors to receive that pain; which is the demerit of their sin (in which else they would disclaim their right) and to compel the Kingdoms of the Earth to drink certainly the Wine-cup of fury (however unwilling they are to it) because it duly appertains to them.

These things are so close to mans
H Soul,

Soul, that punishment is the next expectation after an offence ; and if it be delayed, men are ready to cry out, Where is Justice ? as if it were in a slumber : How reasonable is this account then of Judgments, that there may be a due execution of Justice ?

In this Reason lye the seeds of these sequent Reasons of Judgments.

1. That there may be a sense of Justice preserved in the world, as an admonition against sin. For these inflictions are evident as matters of fact, and countersway the present pleasure of sin for a season, by after-pains.

2. That there may be an expiation of the world; for satisfaction for the present given to Justice for sin, is a purgation *pro tempore*.

3. That men may have assurances of Judgment to come ; seeing such a thing as rendring vengeance that is not perfect, leads to that is absolute.

4. That God may change times and seasons in his Government of the world; for pain unpins and forces the state of things asunder.

5. To reform men, by shewing their folly

folly in shaping their course to the Country of pain and dolors , that they might find pleasure. ,

From this general consideration, let us pass to the particular reasons of Judgments, of which we proceed to speak in order,

CHAP. VII.

The first Reason : The importance to the World, that a Justice over it, be understood.

Reas. 1. **T**Hat there may be the sense of a Justice preserved in the thoughts of men : For the daily evils that fall out , though they are the effects of it ; yet being of a sfter temper, and to be compounded with , are not so cogent Arguments, but easily attributable to the common course of things. These are so still in view, and carried so temperately with the progress of natural causes, that notwithstanding them, *Solomon* observes: Sentence is not speedily executed upon wicked works ; nor will men, who do

not curiously inquire, know by them, whether there be a Justice over the world or not; and therefore still the hearts of the Sons of men are set in them to do evil.

For this cause God erects such pillars of salt in the world, as Judgments, and they stand not only for the admonition of the just present, but they project their instructions upon succession, even that which is most quiet and secure. The Apostle *Peter* observes, the great monuments of Judgments were raised to that stupendous height betimes, that they might over-look all decurrent Ages, and be seen by the last and lowest of the world, that there might be none without such cautions of the Righteousness of God. Their kind too was extraordinary; from Heaven immediately, that the Argument might be more undeniable, and the impression stronger.

But how much the apprehension of such a waking Eye upon all the ways of men, and the administrations of States and Kingdoms, is both to the glory of God, the good Government of the world,

world, & the Interest of man, may without difficulty be understood. For as the Apostle expressing God in a jealousy of the honour of his Goodness, says, he left not himself without witness, but engaged the acts of mercy in giving fruitful times and seasons: So in like manner do the distributions of his Justice give testimony to him, that he judgeth in the Earth, so that all the inferences of Righteousness that are most naturally to be derived from so high a consideration, may fall with greatest force upon the minds of men. For as Judgments being abroad, are prevalent preachers of it; so those that have been heretofore, being past, yet speak: And the treasure of that Justice and Power in God that inflicts them, is an unmoveable perswasion, that no change falls upon, and which indeed carries a constant force, without which those that are past, would have soon been exhausted and spent, and those that are present included within themselves.

Take away the sense of a Justice, and all rules of goodness are chilled into honest notions, and moral speculations

without any sting ; Laws grow feeble, and have only a precarious authority. And if the Justice be only humane, the Sphere is so narrow and restrained, that great wickednesses are committed out of its Jurisdiction and cognisance. But Justice (and that Divine) commands and threatens with all highest confidence, and nothing can find exemption from it ; laying strongest warnings upon men , lest they sin , and giving greatest motives to repentance after the commission ; spanning all reasons for prevention and removal of evil.

Now there are no arguments of a Justice so cogent, as those it self gives, which like things of sense, find least dispute when they are resident by their own motion upon their proper subjects. For as the objects of sense are to sense, so are these strokes of the hand of God to the conscience ; all fineness of conceit and tricks of wit , will not elude the strength of things themselves, taking place upon sense : though they should have inveigled the fancy at a distance from them ; yet the first approach melts the vapour : yea though the Judgment
should

should have been reasoned into a confidence, and undertaken to give an Apathy, as the Stoick to his wise man; yet is it not of proof to the body against these realities, however it may defend the mind. Nor can the Atheist by all the turns of his perverted reason, escape the reciprocations of conscience with the Justice of God, when he is attacked by this pressing hand; even unawares to himself he not only lets in, but often sends out the confessions of it. But yet this difference there is between sense and conscience (which is a common sense in the Soul) that the one depending upon the body is soon overwhelmed, if it be too closely imbraced, or too long held, or too powerfully urged; when the other, proper to a spirit, is the more awakened, and the more certainly possessed by the earnestness of things with it, that are properly agent upon it.

These Judgments then generally drawing from those that are more inclinable to yield them; or pressing from those that are loth to give them such acknowledgments that have raised and

continued an universal consent in this Justice of God we discourse of, make good this first reason we have proposed; That God for his own Glory and the good of man, retains a sense of Justice in the world; this sense being so apt to keep an awe upon the Soul, deterring it from evil, and provoking it to good.

It were but tything the Mint and Cummin of so weighty a consideration, to add to it, that the very Interest of Government and civil Polity lies much in it; which cannot be better conceived, then by offering to the Atheist the choice of his own mind, whether if there be certainly such a Justice animadverting upon mens ways, and this were as certainly and livelily acknowledged, it were not likely to give some better Law to the actions of mankind, then if there were no such Justice, and it were certain to every one, there were no such. He confesses enough, when he imputes the belief of it to the insinuations of Rulers, as one of the necessary Arts to rivet their Decrees, and give them ease in wielding their Scepters.

It may, no doubt, be far argued on the
side

side of virtue, righteousness, and mercy, that they are the very weal of mankind; from whence the Atheistick professor takes advantage, and carries himself demurely upon it, as if no more were necessary to incline men of sobriety, nor any need of borrowing aid from imaginary Principles; but knowing unruly lusts are too boisterous to be commanded by handsom discourse, he provides the iron-hand of Laws and executions to subdue the more unbri-dled part of men: which (saith he) shall go far, where the acknowledgments of a Deity can do nothing.

Let such a one consider, there is a secret strength conveyed up and down the world by the general consent in this radical notion of a God and his Justice, which adds a much higher reason to the wisest minds to sway them, then the meer excellency of goodness it self, which is not the less, but infinitely the greater for being hypostatiz'd in a Divine will; and withal infolds the less sensible part of men, that what they do not consider in its own worth, they yet upon the silent awes of conscience re-
vere,

vere, and drink in with much greater ease the commands of Authority that steer the same way; and more patiently suffer the penalties of their transgressions, being first adjudged to them by themselves.

To sum this; as the predictions of punishment before the execution, were acts of favour to men; so is the established Doctrine that grows out of the many experiments of this vindictive Righteousness of God, a grace to the world, that it may not surprize un-understood or unawares, but keep men in a daily regard to it, not running into its danger by neglect of duty, or presumption in sin.

When it is often in the exercise of it self, it can neither be unknown or forgotten. All which is most condecant to the infinite goodness and graciousness of God, as well as to his Justice.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The second Reason, shewing the necessity of a purgation upon the sinful World.

Reas. 2. **T**He defilement that sin loads the world with, requires a present exoneration by the Judgments of God. The day of his righteous Judgment is the great purification of it, when wickedness and wicked men shall be secluded the Creation into their own place. But though this be perfect and final, the Holiness of God, and his goodness to his Creatures require a sooner mitigation of so great an evil; which he provides for by these Ante-judgments.

For sin lying as an impurity upon the moral Creation of God, and under that upon the very natural, there must be a purgation suitable. All pollutions require some kind of removal, else accumulating themselves, they overload and destroy. In Nature things run through their own circle, wherein lye several expedients by which they acquit themselves

selves from that Sordes they contract : when this is interrupted, ruine is their last resort. The body dyes, and resolves itself, that it may part with that it had not power to expel, while it held together. Earth and air suffer those convulsions and violent schisms, upon themselves, to work out of their bowels and bosoms unfriendly mixtures. The foulnesses of sin require higher and nobler purifications, or more severe depurgations : For the stain they cast, being upon a more excellent state, argues a deeper vitiousness in that which defiles so high, and a more worthy expiation necessary ; as the Apostle saies, the patterns of heavenly things (which he calls worldly) are purified with these legal sacrifices ; but heavenly things with better then such. Our Saviours discourse of meats not defiling the man, but that which comes out of the heart only, confines things within their own kind, natural within natural, spiritual within spiritual, and their defilements are peculiar to themselves. Material things cannot rise above themselves in what they pollute, they cannot defile the

the man : All they do is within their Sphere, in which they roll out of one thing into another. Meats go in at the mouth, enter into the belly, and are cast out into the draught : They run their round, and finish their motion among themselves. To morrow blots out to day, and is itself defaced by after-time. One thing wears off another, and all things are in the constant flux of the water, for their own purification. The body as it stands in a line with these things, is of no greater remark, the actions of it come into no greater account.

But the spiritual state is in all things great, the Laws of it are Royal, Laws of liberty, wisdom, justice, and goodness, elder then time, as ancient to the world as the decrees for the Sea, and rain, for the way of Thunder; then were they searched out and declared to man; equal they are as the ballance of the Clouds; just as the weights for the winds, as the scales in which the mountains were weighed; certain as the Trochees of Nature, ere it was out of tune. All these have relation to God,
who

who is the head of this order, and gives a virtue and greatness to it. They are all everlasting, and bear up themselves consolidate by Eternity.

Man by his Soul is set in this heavenly world, and can no more remove himself out of it, then he can his body out of the material one; let his mind be never so high in its own elevation, it cannot keep the impressions of matter off from his earthy part; much less can he by sensuality untye his relation to spirituality, to which his Soul knits him so fast; God having given a touch and feeling, a sense and judgment, though it be not improved. Whatever a Soul doth, or doth not, that is, wherein it refuses, or through neglect minds not to act, becomes most momentany; for all partakes the spirituality of its nature, and receives beauty or deformity, purity or defilement from the powers of that Law within it. A man cannot be a beast, though he degenerate like one.

Sin then receiving force from the Soul that commits it, mounts the spiritual Creation, and rests it self in the world

world of Righteousness, as a defilement in it adheres to it ; as death, deformity, sickness, emptiness, darkness, do to the solid parts of the Creation ; and thereby challenge a place in this world, which yet in themselves are nothing but the want of the due perfection of the subject to which they adjoyn.

Thus have we considered these two worlds as distinct ; yet is there in this world an *Ordo ad Spiritualia*, through which it is inclasped under the Government of the higher, having a capacity to be sublimated to ends above it self, which is as a cement betwixt them both ; whence it comes to pass, that sin descends upon the lower by neglect, or inversion of the order wherein it stands: the first of which is to depress the works of God below his intention and aim at his own Holiness in them, and is to disanul it: the latter is to debauch the Creatures of God to lust, blotting out his superscription, and setting that of sin in the room ; and both are to build up evil grounded in matter to the third Heaven. Thus though meats cannot defile the man, yet the man may defile him-

himself by meats, and defile the meats ; as on the other side, meats commend him not to God ; yet he may by a holy use, by the Word, and prayer, commend himself, and sanctifie them : he is able by his Soul to touch them into gold, or to taint them with his own impurity.

And this very innate power, though a man never considers it, nor behaves himself worthily by his judgment and caution of it, is yet the same as to the substance, as if he had a Soul never so greatned and enlarged by improvement.

When there is a defilement among spiritual things, every thing in the whole spiritual Nature keeps it extant, and puts a seal upon it ; the certainty and unchangeableness of those holy Laws ; the all-seeing Eye of God ; an infinite mind and understanding ; an infinite purity, an everlasting Justice and Judge ; the consent of the whole world of spirits with him ; the immortality of the Soul, from which the defilement immediately rises, and recoiling rests. From whence it comes to pass, that what men do with their Souls, they never lose,

lose, but live in the midst of all their actions, whether good or evil. For God keeping in force these Laws, retains and binds the Soul sinning under the sense of what it hath done, and sends down the charges of his wrath into the conscience, and dispatches punishments as he pleases, ever preserving inviolable records of every transgression, laid up within his own Justice, and registred in the guilty breast, which sucks in the air it hath breathed out, and if evil, is settled into a defilement so great, that nothing is pure to it.

Let us then compute things, and when we find so many men in the world, whose actions are going out by hundreds and thousands, having no balance of righteousness upon them, nor sifted by any examination; but rolling down that great precipice and declivity of humane Nature all corrupted, not only with their own violence, but by the force of that power of darkness that concurs with them, what must the amount of the impurity then be?

That an Eternal Judgment counter-
vails all this evil in number, weight,
I and

and measure, shall be hereafter discoursed : But how Judgments take off the foulness of sin at present, is now to be considered ; which may better be conceived by applying their efficacies to every of the particulars of its defilement, in these following observations.

1. That prime and eternal Holiness, which with its Glory governs the spiritual order and beauty of things in a conform Holiness, Righteousness, and Purity, as their first constitution ; when offended by the sin of any of the proper subjects of it, is secondarily repaired by punishment upon the sinner.

We may consider this as abstracted into its own most spiritual Nature, or formed into Laws, and either way punishment repairs it.

1. If in its own spiritual Nature we look upon it, there is a splendour in punitive Justice, which is another mode of that Eternal Holiness shewing it self ; it is the zeal and earnest intention of it, meeting with any thing aliene and receded from it.

The wrath of God is the flame, or light-fire of his infinite purity, in contest with



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with iniquity; which gives such a lustre, that all the Earth is filled with this glory, and is an accidental illumination of the superior state of things: For which had there been no place, undoubtedly all entrances of sin had been precluded: The Apostle speaks of God, that he willing to shew his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. Knowing how to give reparations to himself, he permits to sin and sinners a scope in their own actions: There is yet no communion betwixt light and darkness, only another kind of efficacy of light. For that which endures not the approach of the least evil, but by its own vigour and perfection throws it off with abhorrence and disdain, can never be defiled; but hath occasion from evil to manifest its own intenseness and supremacy, and preserve in another way the same lustre and greatness of the whole state under it.

2. If we consider this Holiness, as it is formed into Laws, wherein the state of it is more plain, the first honour of a

Law is obedience ; if that be not paid, the second is punishment, which keeps up the Majesty and greatness of it, and even establisheth its authority ; those Laws being only weakned and infringed by transgression, which go unrevenge ; for then the power passes out of the Law, and settles in the transgression, which from thence assumes an authentickness, and damnes the Law to an obsoletion. But if the Law hath the offender in its hand to deal severely with, and to condemn, the power is apparently with it, & it can terrifie into its observation, those whom it cannot allure by its direction, equity, and rewards ; which makes evil a feeble and weak thing : for whoever is bold in it, presumes upon his own ruine, not only serving without protection, but under the certain penalty of dying the death. Thus a further potency of the Law is explained and opened, that else had lain hid at least in the effect, *viz.* that it cannot only command, but avenge. It is true, the natural desire of every good Law is to be obeyed, and to have the hearts of men burn in innocent flames of affection

affection and devotion to it, rejoycing more in its power to rule well, and do good : but when this is not accepted, the violater is struck by the hand of it, that it may not betray its power to Anarchy and wickedness. All the Laws of God have therefore come armed into the world with threats and denunciations of wrath, that the rebellions he foresaw might not diminish ought from the greatness of them ; and the Judgments that gave being to those threats, and made them true thunderbolts, have come professedly to recompence the injuries done to his commands, and revenge their quarrel, that all may know There is a Government in the world.

2. Judgments are a great expiation of the spiritual world it self. God instructs the vicegerent powers under him to assail themselves and a Nation from community in piacular actions, by heaping the guilt upon the offenders head ; which proceeding separates the malefactor from the common mass, and dismembring him from the society of which he was, disinterests that in the perpetration. This is the great mean-

ing of that excommunication recommended by the Apostle as of so much use in the Church of God. This was the sense of Sacrifices, in which beasts commuted for men, attracted like common sponges, symbolical guilt upon themselves, and by death or that ceremonial exile of the Scape-Goat, were thrust out of the world for the atonement of it. As therefore things set apart to holy ends, and distinguished from the ordinary heap, were Nazarited to God; so are persons under this kind of devotion also, and have a more unhappy sacredness upon them to his Justice, being herein Catharmatical to the rest, put out from among them, & forced down into the common receptacles of impurity. For when unclean things or persons are reduced to their own place, as the Apostle speaks of *Judas*, they cease to defile. We see throughout the world, pollution arises from the boldness of things (that for their unworthiness and impurity ought to be by themselves, and bound in darkness) appearing openly, and joyning with better company; or when that which is of a better alloy moves downwards,

wards, and submits it self to mean allays; like the Sons of God falling in love with the daughters of men: But when noisomness is stopped up in its own vaults, and cast into its own lake, those depurations preserve the common air wholesome and free, and the great complex is not indamaged.

That therefore which the Justice of man is too little and weak for, God who hath a much wider Jurisdiction, performs by extending his Anathematisms, his greater or lesser excommunications (as to his Justice appertains) upon greatest Princes and Nations, till at last by that Anathema Maran-atha of casting into Hell, he makes a purgation so perfect, that nothing out of it hath the least breath or exhalation of that great Sewer upon it. For were not that segregation to the very utmost, it would certainly have been an annihilation; so incompatible is the foul state of things with the pure, when brought to their everlasting and incommutable point.

3. God gives a period to evil, and iniquity comes to an end by his Judgments, which sometimes fall upon the

great Engineers, the workers of iniquity, and either causing them to drink the wine of astonishment, that they have no further spirits and life for sin, or cutting them off in the midst of their work, force them to leave off to build their *Babel*; sometimes he takes from them the instruments and matter with which they are at work, so that they have no more to do; or lastly, the very Scene or Stage upon which they are acting; the Cities and Countries that bore them, are as it were removed. Now when God doth any of these, there follows a great silence of evil, and a cessation of the further defilement of it; as a calm and stilness ensues, when great Tyrants that have made a huge noise in the world, go down into the nethermost parts of the Earth, and lay their Swords under their heads: or as when Cities that have filled that circuit of Earth they took up with the sound of their pomp and business, become a desolation, an unwonted quiet succeeds there; even then there is a present stop upon that constant stream of wickedness that ran along with the duration
of

of Princes and Cities in their flourish, till as their power and greatness rises in some other part of the world, so a like impiety grows up out of their ruines; the whole course of time being spent in mowing down those great repullulations of sin that are no sooner cut and gathered in one Age or place, but they spring in another, until the harvest of the Earth is fully ripe, and the last time reaped by that sickle that leaves nothing to be done after it: till then History swells with these descriptions, and prophetick Writings most livelily represent such vindemiations, and to the ends we have now discoursed.

4. Herein also are the Creatures freed from their unworthy services; the righteous use that God makes of them, restoring them to that sanctity that stood in dedication to himself; in which, if they suffer a resemblance of punishment, as they first received a seemingly culpable imitation of mans sin, it is but purgatorial; for the whole Creation is by Judgments in a degree now, at last perfectly freed from soil, and restored to its first and genuine clearness.

5. Man

5. Man himself who is the defiler and most defiled, is led by affliction to purification, if sin hath not eaten so deep into him, that he is become one with that accursed thing, and so himself fit to be made a curse. This usefulness of Judgments shall be disposed into a distinct head of reason.

CHAP. VIII.

The third Reason expresses the connexion of these with Eternal Judgment.

Reas. 3. **T**HAT men may have assurances of Judgment to come; for these are but the little pieces and scalings of that great mountain of it with God, lesser vials of that great Sea, which in favour to the world are distributed to forewarn it of the last day: In favour, I say, to the world, there being nothing of like moment to communicate to it either as a warning against sin, or obligation to repentance, seeing it is a Judgment that comprehends all, whereas possibility of escape lessens the motives from present punishment;

ment ; and also because the settlement it makes is unchangeable, but many outlive their present calamities , or at least are ransomed from them by death. God therefore teaches us before-hand that so great vengeance : These lesser sums are arguments of that treasure , for he that is infinitely rich , hath provided a great abundance of all things ; and from a little we may argue there is a whole Element of the same within his command, when he sees good, and that the like or greater reason calls for and requires it in the same or greater measures : when God had use of the water for a deluge , not only that we see and account for , but unknown Cataracts were opened. There are hidden powers in God to create things, of which we see no prints , nor are so much as able to conceive , who are in every thing confined by what we see and know is done ; because of the little grasp of our mind, we call into question of impossibility what we have never seen, and of improbability what we seldom see. That we may therefore be led to further conviction of such a Judgment, then

then the bare affirmation of it (though from him whose word is a Creation, that were enough) God sets the realities of it before us; in which we may behold all in a little, as a man is drawn in an infant; and therefore he uses to express that little by the whole, that we might be the more acquainted with it: we see his power hereby to call to account whom he pleases, how, and when he pleases; he accustoms Nature to frequent dislocations before that final remove. And because our incredulity of it is so much and so faulty, besides our other demerits, like *Zachary*, we are confirmed by a punishment inflicted on us for the time being: In our flesh is printed the certainty of an Eternal Judgment by a temporary one, God chastising our unbelief as well as our sins by this his hand; or as Christ evinced his pardoning authority in Heaven by his pardon of sins on Earth, that was by an act of his goodness expressed in such effects of it, as men upon Earth measure the power of causes by: So these his Judgments drawn down to us where we are, and composed to our present

sent sentiments , are the fittest demonstrations of that which is as much above us as the Heaven above the Earth, & of that to come ; of which we are always doubtful, whether it will be or no : For with slender reason can we dispute against the futurity of such a Tribunal that is out of the reach of our calculation, whether it shal be or not (had we not a revelation of it) who are daily surprized with the wonders wrought before us, which we would not have believed , if they had been told us before they came to pass, though much more near our Prognosticks then the other. From whence we may well infer , All the declarations we have of these things from God, shall certainly be fulfilled in their season ; since things so unexpected to us, the search of which, and their likelihoods of event is not so far out of our depth, do yet appear , and all we have to say against them is but this, we never thought it. What may not then be, that is assured shall be in those things we can pretend to no acquaintance with , though we are not aware of them before ?

But

But further then this : when we see some times and persons that have the marks of Judgment upon them, and that look as smitten of God ; & others again that have no such scars, and yet we cannot but say, deserve punishment ; and often equally with the others : if there were not a Judgment to come, it would argue a partiality in that Justice, which yet we know is so great and free, that it accepts no mans person for being great, nor over-looks any as too small for its eye.

If there were not a Judgment to come, and that universal, our Saviours discourse, that we should not rate sin and sinners by their sufferings here, would fall, when he says, All that do not repent shall perish in like manner, that is, as notoriously as those upon whose destruction the eyes of the world are set ; and yet we see many flagitious persons passing impune out of this life, having given charity it self no hopes of their penitence : His perswasives of the necessity of repentance from thence, would be of no force or strength, if there were not a Judgment to come,
and

and a perishing beyond all we see here.

There were no place of Argument, if it could establish it self so great against Divine Providence and Righteousness, or against all Religion and Christianity, as that which supposes, there is no everlasting and final determination further off then now, to reconcile the great inconsistencies of things with their disorders, which do but seem to be, because there is a Judgment, but would indeed be, if there were none.

If then there be such a day of God, and his righteous Judgment, and the lesser acts of it deserved messengers of so immediate a mission, sealed often with miracles; that which is so much greater, and in which all is summed by proportion, should have the most solemn embassie; accordingly God takes care, for the Doctrine of it is delivered by his Son, and confirmed by his Resurrection from the dead.

All the Judgments of God from the very beginning down to the end, offer themselves as the premonitions of that Day; the eldest Prophets spake of it, *Enoch* the seventh from *Adam* said, The
Lord

Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints; and the most ancient of Judgments, the Angels thrown into chains of darkness, declare the Judgment of that great Day; because it is the acquittal of Providence that hath seemed crooked here, while it hath run through the mazes of the froward and strange ways of men, and therefore appeared as confused and intangled as they. God not depending upon time, as an unquestionable or indisputable representation of his Rule of the world, hath thought it worthy of himself to provide by a last Judgment to assail his Government of it from all possible calumny, by shewing the greatness of his skill then, in those cross-lines, those shades and lights that encounter one another now, and look like perplexity and errour in the parts, but in the whole picture will present adorable wisdom, excellent in this above all, that it hath made every thing with such aspects upon this end of things, and with such direct motions to this center: If that therefore were taken away, the several lines and paths in the world would lead no whither, nor rest

rest any where; and not only so, but the great points of Christianity leaning upon this Postulare, would fall. As therefore God doth indeed hasten all things hither, that they might not wander over-long, though by a measure of time, that seems tedious to us, yet without any delay in himself, or in the thing it self: For yet a little time, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry: So doth he support the inclining faith of men concerning it with all reasonable assurances of it; that what it will fully do at last, it may proportionably do now, if it be not wilfully disbelieved and slighted.

CHAP. IX.

Fourth Reason, expressing the Government of the World falling in with Judgments.

WHen from the sins of men, and Gods Government over them, arise those reasons of Judgment of so deep an Interest in his Righteousness and Goodness, as we have already given,

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ven, and shall yet add ; it is no way dishonourable to God to interpose this, as one account of Judgments, That he takes occasion from hence to variegate his administration and providence, and to adorn that great Table of Time with those mixed colours , which when seen at that true light we last spoke of, will reflect the beauty of infinite understanding and wisdom , as in a curious piece of Tapestry, the pleasure of which is its well placed diversity , when we see it on the right side , and fully infolded ; till then it may seem an unskillful confusion. God, I say, takes advantage from the sins of men thus to govern the world by his Judgments, not that there was any thing new to Providence in the breaking out of sin, that it did not think of before : yet it became the infinitely good and holy Creator to give the first model of things answerable to himself, and when out of deep Counsel he determined to suffer a perturbation, even then to undertake the guidance of those many cross and unruly motions, that certainly fall out upon so great a disorder for the further dis-

displays of his Eternal understanding. As the skill of the Painters hand may be as great, and appear far greater, the sudden varieties giving an advantage, and the difficulty enhancing the Art, when he draws a confusion, then when he shadows an accomplished piece of order; and the prudence of a Leader more known, when it turns it self to every accident, in a mutiny or ungoverned medley, then when it leads a well-governed Army, and only keeps pace with the known Rules of Military Discipline. It is first most natural to God to rule, and to rule with infinite wisdom and goodness; next having permitted things to distemper through the sin of man, to over-rule that very distemper, to set off the excellency of his own conduct by it: For when the sins of men have brought it to that pass, that there must be Judgments, it is most worthy of God; that by them the state of the world should be also managed, which if that case had not been put, should have been conducted by mercy only. But now Judiciary Providence is a bridle, that God puts into

the mouth of humane affairs, and turns about the whole body of them how furious and fiery soever : It is a Helm with which he wheels about the most bulkie actions, and driven of boisterous winds, raging and impetuous passions : It rolls down States and Governments, and carries huge mountains of times and seasons before it. Dominion is whirled about to several points ; Monarchies are dashed in pieces, that could have prescribed for themselves, and others rise out of their ashes. He divides the Nations, and the everlasting Hills bow themselves ; he weighs and measures out Princes ; he gives the Earth to whom he pleases ; he shews his signs and tokens in Heaven and Earth by his Judgments, and in these things none can stay his hand either with power, seeing every thing depends upon him ; nor by reason or pleas of right, seeing all that he gave is forfeited back into his hand by sin. Of this reason of Judgments Scripture is not at all silent, but avows with highest confidence the translation of things according to the pleasure of God, who worketh all things
after

after the counsel of his will ; who created all things, and for whose pleasure they are and were created, and yet he never moves them from their rest, but with just respects to sin ; for he takes pleasure in righteousness. The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his Throne, the Emblem of his Dominion, hath its habitation as well in equity as Judgment, and exercise of power.

CHAP. X.

Fifth Reason, expressing the usefulness of Judgments to reform.

Reas. 5. **T**Hat they may be forcible recommendations of repentance and reformation ; which account of them removes them from Mount *Sinai*, and places them upon Mount *Sion* ; like those precepts that were first given with all circumstances of terrour, and after adapted into the mildness and gentleness of the Evangelick Law. For there is nothing wherein God is more gracious to man, then in those advantages he gives him to return.

to a right mind: when he takes those methods that are rough and severe in themselves, and makes use of them for medicine, they lose whatever is hard and grievous in them, & are even chuse-able thus far, That it is more to be desired God should chastise, and not hate us, then with a greater indignation and revenge not be angry with us. It is better we should pass through his fire, then be unpurged, and even boiled in his Cauldron, melted in his Furnace, and brayed in his Mortar, then remain in our own impenitency, dross, and folly.

God the best as he is the greatest, in those things wherein he is most potent, is also most benigne, and therefore casts beams of his goodness upon his most dreadful disposes: He made not the night without some beauties of the day. As the Father of Heaven and Earth, and more peculiarly of the spirits of men, he takes care of his off-spring and family with the bowels of the Father of mercies. But then as the infinite Holiness, as the Ruler and Judge of all the world, he plants all his works, even of
mercy,

mercy, in righteousness : from both which arise a discipline most conducive to the participations of his Holiness, guiding us first by Rules, and after admonishing us by corrections, and reducing us by chastisements, which are most proper acts of a paternal Government.

This sweetens and mollifies those more awful respects he carries upon the world, as supreme in his Dominion and Judgment, though even in those, it is agreeable with increased mercy to leave nothing untryed and without its experiment, that might conduce his Creatures; much more, as he governs the world in a Mediator, all his relations to mankind are infinitely endeared and made kinder by the presence of God with us.

While this reason of all others doth most, not only vindicate, but addulce and commend these severities of God to us, because it stands so fair with all his Attributes, and level with the good of man, we will take a freer account of the use of Judgments under it.

In the general we may understand,
K 4 there

there is nothing in the works of God, so thin or volatile, as for sight only, but would imbody & fix it self in use. In Nature it self, those things which afford us only speculation, because we have not the Mechanicks of them in our own hand, nor any Engines to move them with, are yet in their own place full of that common labour and industry (*Solomon* speaks of) to serve the world, and by the screws of one thing upon another, fastned on them in Creation, they are applyed more effectually to common ends, then those that are elaborated by our selves, and carried by our endeavour and art to the private ends of our necessity and pleasure.

In Religion, the most mysterious parts of it, and which we think furthest removed from action, are yet indeed the pillars of it, and richest springs of a heavenly conversation; like the superior bodies, that being far above us, are yet the source of all the vigour and fruitfulness of moral precepts, that, as the Earth, are nearer us.

Judgments are yet most evidently designed for our practice; for (as we see)

see) all approaches of pain quicken to some kind of action, and disperse that lethargick humour that benummes and deadens us; nothing stands still to feel and contemplate its own misery: and when this is understood to be the admeasurement of so knowing and just a hand as Gods, it calls us to acts that become us; and while it calls us, it also excites us, and after a physical manner, disposes us to those respects to his counsels and ends in administering punishment. According to which Notion we shall propose our following meditation herein.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Use true Reason may make of the assurance Sense both of the Evils we call Judgments; and how far it may advance toward Christianity.

BEfore we enter upon the more direct powers of Judgment in order to practice, let us see what will necessarily follow from Gods setting such a thing

thing as Adversity in the world, and what advantages to the Doctrine of Christianity, as worthy all acceptance, will flow from this naked consideration by easie inferences; as consecutaries from Principles.

We will then take but thus much, that is most undoubted: That humane condition is very obnoxious to unhappiness and misery; whether we consider it as united into Communities, or broken into single persons. It is a great receipt of trouble, man is born to it, as the sparks flye upward. All Histories, Ages, Families, Persons, and Sects of men are agreed in this, because it is evident to sense.

Our senses are those agents and emissaries of our Souls, that we most trust, and in whose intelligence we most easily settle, and with least doubt. God hath therefore taken care Religion should have some foundation here, even in the certain and unquestionable assurance of sense.

That it is appointed to all men once to dye, is a resolution of unexceptionable experience; and upon this, Heathens

thens have raised great structures of moral wisdom and practice. That there is a world of creatures in so great a variety, and yet framed with aspects upon, and subordinacies one to another, is in no mans power to deny : all our senses bring us every moment strong assurances of these things, like one post after another, that Scepticism about them is but a ridiculous madness. How do these press to the acknowledgment of a God ! pestilences, famines, desolations by war, and the miseries attending them, are such known things to us, that we cannot doubt. And how do these urge to the awe of a Justice ! For upon this indubitable Philosophy of sense, fall in those common notions, wherein man is taught, by reading, what is written in his heart. They come into the former, as light upon the Fabrick of the world, that shews us the use and ends of every thing, and invites to action. And these have as ready an assent in mans Soul, and would have as general an agreement of mankind in them, as the other, were it not that men finding them in the way of their irreligious and sensual

sensual practice, are necessitated to call
 them into question, as far as they can,
 and accuse them of incertainty or fal-
 shood, which first impeach their ways
 of folly, and condemn them of wicked-
 ness. For the Law is a continual grief
 to them that are out of the way. From
 hence discourses to the dishonour of
 such awful Hests have a pleasingness,
 and give advantage to those that affect
 a reputation by dissenting from the
 most received Principles, to speak of
 them, as if they were the common
 cheats into which the herd of people are
 either driven, or abused; while they
 to whose lives such Harangues are set,
 cannot indeed believe what they seem to
 admire so much. But when we consider,
 the great sentiments of Religion have
 their truest reverence for their relation
 to another world; and few think, but
 that the present might be well enough
 managed without them, being altoge-
 ther careless of the other: It is not to be
 conceived, how they are continued so
 certain among men in spite of the
 combination against them, if they had
 not an evidence in mans Soul, past the
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cunning of any design possibly to infuse or remove. Not to mention the exotick Characters of them in those parts which have had no commerce with the learned world, most reasonably to be suspected of such artifice.

But we will first reason upon that acknowledgment, which bears no difference of opinion: That is,

There are such universal unhappinesses in the world, which comprehend greatest Powers, and Bodies of men, besides those that grasp more frequently, and with greater liberty, private families and persons. Touching which we will also suppose a while, that they are no more then certain revolutions and conjunctions, or but the play and sport of things against humane condition.

And raising things no higher then thus, yet we shall find so much towards God and Christianity, even hereby introduced, upon but a wise and manly computation of things, that will make the rest much more easie, and surprize us with the reasonableness of the whole beyond imagination, that sense could have contributed so much to Religion.

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For what man of Soul can deny , but that seeing all worldly things are so inconstant , and so often adverse ; humility , indifferency to the world, and the happiness of it ; sobriety, a temperate use of all things , contentment with our condition, patience, are virtues created even of necessity ? and if these were admitted and received in their full strength , how easie would the ascent from them to the higher Principles of Religion be ? He that is thus initiated, would find freer approach to the mystery of Godliness, and take the Dye of it by being thus coloured first.

And yet , except we shall count all but dream and mistake, that ever hath risen from the Soul and sense of mankind ; except there be no such things as reason and discourse , these things must be received. And surely the operations of our minds concerning them, are as plain, and commanding , as that we have bodies , and that they have motion, and are subject to such impressions as they are.

Let us further argue herein , leaving out still the supposition of a God and
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his Judgments : And what can we take instead of what I have proposed, but the Sensualists, Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we dye ; let us crown our selves with Rose-buds before they be withered ; that is, let us ruffle as high as we can in all manner of pleasure and sensual fruition how impure soever, while we have season, and in a moment go down to the dead : Let us take the mirth and jollity the present time affords, not fore-stalling unhappiness with preconcepts of it ; and when worse comes , let us bear it as well as we can, but throw from us all those fantomes of a mind or virtuous consideration, as if they were only air, and breath for their truth, and of no service to man, but to torture and deprive him of all enjoyment.

Now this doth so violently despoil a man of all he can be supposed to have an understanding given him for, and turns him into the condition of a beast, that it cannot seem credible , man should have powers given him, and possibilities of consideration above such a state, and nothing at all to do with them. We see
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in all other creatures. their action and their powers are equal, except we could imagine, that beasts have phantasies and contemplations of things of a higher state then their own.

But who that hath not forfeited all sober face, dares owne so brutish a life, who doth not detest such a debasement of reason, that it should either have nothing to do, or no more then sense can do in the Beasts?

Yet lest this should be too much to be confident upon, we will only say, There is a great disposition in the mind and Soul of man, that is never so little opened and unfolded by ingenuity, education, or observation of it self, to improve it, and compose it self by reason to an excellency standing in virtue and magnanimity, to cast the accounts of evil, publick or private; and to secure it self first by moderation and withdrawalment from all these outward things; then by the better enrichments of self with knowledge and goodness: lastly, to flank it self with patience and resolution, that it may be defended on every side against whatever can befall it on the right hand or the left. That

That men of Philosophy have flown this pitch without any tincture of Christianity, or colour of the Doctrine of the Scriptures upon them, is enough known: That they have discoursed of greatning their spirits against all assaults of Fortune, of constancy of mind raised upon the confidence of a mans native excellency, and domestick riches, out of the reach of all extern disorder, those writings of theirs so much magnified, and worn by every hand, testifie.

Furthermore, seeing every man feels within him an Impetus to pursue that first-born desire to be happy; he that goes about it considerately, must needs find, There can be no such thing as happiness in the outward man, whose condition is subject to every change.

The room of the body is indeed too narrow and close, the receipts of it too dark and pent, to entertain so great a presence as happiness; but besides this, the accessles are too open to pain and misery, the sound and noise of all kind of disturbance is ever about it, and one time or other the things crowd in upon it. But happiness is even, and all alike;

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it is a consistency, a perpetuity, or nothing : A perpetuity, that at this time we date not into Eternity, but allow that to be so, which fills up its own measure, and runs out to its own utmost length ; that in this case we allow to be so, that is commensurate with the present life and being in the world. But it is impossible to preclude the pressures of evil from this moment ; for no man can tell how soon a disease bred within his own walls, shall wage a war against him, and blast all his contentments ; how immediately a violence from without shall rob him of what most pleases him. Whoever then will lodge any such thing as a felicity within himself, must retire it into this apartment of his Soul, and himself sequestred from body, and dissolved from it, must retreat into spirit, that he may enjoy it : He must forsake all things beyond the line of mind, and looking upon them as the daily prey of every contingent, be wholly unconcerned what becomes of them ; though he uses them while they are to be had, yet with greatest indifference, coolness, and freedom from them,

them, and even then despising them, when he seems to enjoy them. He must bear the strokes of evil with that part alone upon which they fall, and never let them touch his mind. In the mean time he must raise and ennoble his Soul, and carry all kind of treasure into it, that is proper for it; he must fortifie, and environ it on every side with courage and longanimity; he must watch, that it be not betrayed by lust or inordinate affection, nor made weak and false by such correspondencies which do not only open an avenue to suffering, but leave a guilt behind them; of which, though we suppose no higher Judge than himself, yet the reverence he owes to his own authority, and the severity he feels from himself, when that is offended, obliges him to innocence.

Thus while he hath a being in the world, he maintains it in peace and greatness; first not taken and decoyed out of himself by the general applause of pleasures, riches, and honours, he hears in the world; nor sunk below himself, when he finds any of these gone,

whose service he accepted , so as to be well without them , though he did not morosely refuse them , but either when through their own inconstancy they change their master , or are compelled to leave him ; he is yet the same he was, living in himself, and supplied in all things by himself : For he hath taken the elevation of every thing in the world , and of his own Being ; he hath set down the incertainty of these things, and therefore he is not amazed at what he expected ; he hath taken the estimate of wisdom and vertue , and finds them invaluable in their price, unmoveable in their nature ; his business is therefore to fabricate his mind for them: These are his happiness, that do not feel the pain of a disease , the cruelty of a sword, the pinches of a famine ; his Soul is the Cabinet of them , that nothing from without can either find or touch, while it keeps it self distinct, and alone from the body , which it visits by a necessary charity and care of it, but dares not mix with it, lest it first be insecured with its lusts, and after infected with its misery.

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Thus hath Reason in the dark, and unenlightned by Sacred Truth, felt out happiness, and having enough from sense, that it could not be out of the Soul, hath placed it within. But if there be no better state beyond this life, who feels not a compassion, that such a man as hath been described, must dye; that so great a Soul that can protect it self, while it is in motion and action, must yet be suppressed by death; that he whose reason and magnanimity endures the torture, must yet be silenced and stupified by Fate! Who doth not wish that Soul should out-live that body in a perfecter state, that lived now so much above and beyond it? Yea, who would not desire that that Soul that had so well commanded a body, should have a glorious one to shine in, and that out of the ashes of that body in which such a Soul dwelt, and taught it virtue, another more perfect should rise?

In the mean time, would not just cause of complaint arise, if Fortune or a blind course of things, should have any dispose of, but the outside of such a man? Who would not desire there

should be a God , who with skill first exercises virtue into a lustre , and then rewards it ? Who that hath any love to virtue, would not bewail it , if there were no other difference between virtue and vice , then what is seen here ; and rejoyce in an Eternal Judgment that would illustrate and crown it ? Who would not wish virtue ennobled with the love of so blessed a Being as God, and that it should be made more considerable by pleasing him ; that it should be enriched by the knowledge of Jesus Christ, so great an Exemplar of it in our nature ; that it should be assisted by the blessed Spirit of Grace, without which it cannot sustain it self ? And who that behaves himself thus in the world (as we have described) can but think the Principles of Christianity would best fit his purpose and manner of life , and therefore be willing to espouse them ? For though this we have insisted upon , be all a man can do , and that he must do to retain any thing of the honour of a man ; it is yet but poor and unhappy , if separated from the hopes and promises of immortality.

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very jejune and cold, when alone ; virtue without Christianity is but like the temporary and perishing things of the world, that make a blaze , and then go out. Though that of virtue be the purest , yet it is as soon quenched by death ; and while it is , it wants much of the true alloy and reason : For so great an object of goodness, whom continually to love and adore, so great a Spectator and Judge, so gracious a Father of Spirits , and their excellent endowments, as God, makes as great a difference in these things, as the light of the Sun doth in the world , compared with the light of the Moon ; and as the influences of the one surpass those of the other , so do the virtues falling from the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ , excel those chiller irradiations of Moral Disciplines , when separated from Diviner Fire.

But we have thus far argued from the sentiments of Morality upon Sense, that we might from thence conclude ; Seeing there is no security for man in his compounded state of Body and Soul , and that yet the appetite of man contends

towards happiness with so much earnestness, he must either be a beast stifling all motions but of sense, and the just present satisfaction; so that he may enjoy himself, when things are well, and suffer as a beast, when evil falls upon him, without any agitation of a mind; or else he must be an Angel, removing his chief interests out of the body.

This wise men, without any suspicion of subordination from Christianity, confessed, and therefore the ground on which true Religion states all things, must needs be to Morality, that is not sullen and prejudiced, the most acceptable: For sagest Ethicks (guided by Christ indeed, as *Cyrus* by God, though they knew him not) acknowledged this conclusion of the matter, That there must be some higher end of men than the body, and that all his condition must be resigned to that; and hereupon waded as far as they could into those deeper Doctrines of the Immortality of the Soul, a Judgment, a future state, besides that which was much opener to them, the acknowledgment of the First Being, God.

Now he that upon these grounds
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dyes to his flesh to live in his Soul , is not far from the Kingdom of God and Christ ; which teaches a man to deny himself , and sow his present life to let it dye as a grain of wheat, which except it dye, abides alone (that is) can never be any more then it is , but loses it self at last ; whilst that which submits it self to a short death, in expectation of a better resurrection, propagates it self to Eternity.

The assurances of Everlasting life at the end , and in the meantime that no imaginable thing , either height or depth, life or death , what is present or to come, shall separate from that love of God in Christ, which makes more then a Conqueror in all, are true grounds of the happiness of man , and only sufficient herein.

All these Christianity hath the honour to reveal , and yet Morality hath so great need of to impe it self with , that if it were it self alone , it must needs adore this Revelation ; however as it is blended in men with corruption of Nature , and planted among those roots of bitterness that spring up and defile it,
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it may profess an enmity; yet certainly as those Heathen Princes paid a reverence to that God that had foretold their successes by his Prophets, so it is impossible but all wise use of reason must needs say of the Doctrine of Christ, There is a divine thing in it, seeing it doth not only establish the same rules of life with that reason, but advances the encouragements of them to the very Heavens.

CHAP. XII.

Of the much higher Elevation of Reason into Christianity, received from the improvement of innate and revealed Principles concerning Judgments.

Hitherto we have from evidence of sense stated things, as if man finding them in a posture generally adverse to him, were by his own wisdom and virtue to make the best of himself, and to rise by it, as much above the condition of the creatures below him, as his understanding exceeds theirs: and discoursing

coursing thus, we have fathomed the excellencies of Christian Religion, without which Morality sinks very low. But we come now into a debate upon those Principles ingrafted in mans heart, heightened by the Word of God, even as the sensitive Soul is elevated by the presence of the rational; or as the reason is advanced by the Spirit of God inhabiting it, *viz.* That there is a God, an Eternal condition, that all calamities upon humane Nature are from God and his Justice for sin.

And who that is wise would leave so strong a sense as his Soul hath of these things, unsatisfied, unanswered? Or why should a man be truly dealt with by his eye and ear, his tast and touch, and that common sense that weilds them, and deceived by that inward intelligence, his mind? Why should it be true, there are wars, plagues, &c. and that these are grievous and destructive; and not be true, that God punishes by them? Sense is sure of the one, innate reason of the other; the reports of which are as confident and earnest, and if heeded, most prevailing and effective:

fective : For as the universality of men believe sense about its own objects, so do they acknowledge these Principles even against themselves , when in their evil actions they wander from them. If evil practice be taken for an argument against good Principles, why is not self-condemnation for that evil practice, a much stronger argument on their side, especially seeing it is taken for no sufficient Plea against assurance of sense, that men most considerable disbelieve it, and act contrary to it (wherein it pretends beyond it self against truer dictates) that they may obey the sadder resolves of their minds ? Or who that is any thing suspicious and examinative, as every man in this wilderness of things hath reason to be, would be careless of so valuable and reverend a Record as the Word of God ? which he sees so great and wise a part of men for several Ages, have had such an awe of, and found so great an efficacy in. Every one conscious of reason in himself, cannot but attend to him that speaks gravely and rationally, and think him worthy to be heard, and the more, when he knows
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he is esteemed and attended to by those of whom he is bound to think, if he have understanding himself, they have it also. But most of all in this case, he hath cause to beware how he despises, when he converses with that so venerable a representation of things, that vouches it self to be divine, and is so received by so great and grave an Assembly, as the Church of God in all Ages; into which if he patiently and seriously inquire, and advise with it, he shall find such an august presence of truth in it, that he must needs acknowledge more then humane. For as men print their Souls, and the strength of reason they carry, into their writings, and he that reads them intelligently, traces the sagacity of that mind that moved in them, gilding its own paths; so is the wisdom of God to be found in his Word, and that power and sense of mans Soul that judges of things divine, as reason in general doth of rational, will say, God is in it of a truth.

Let us then observe the Oracles of our own minds, and those livelier of the Scripture concerning Judgments, and
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what, must necessarily be inferred from them.

First, it is plain from hence, affliction hath no root of its own, nor doth it rise up out of the dust; it is not only the unavoidable clash of things one against another, but all the unhappiness and pain that is in the world, must be an administration of an infinite Righteousness and Power, who hath all the organs of evil in his own power, and no instrument of it is out of his hand. This is the present resolve of mans mind: For as the Soul of man can rise no higher in its thoughts, or surmises of any thing or Being then to God; so if it be not stupified, as in senseless ignorant men, or stopped and forced to be quiet, as in the Atheist, it cannot rest, but searches and soars, and mounts it self, till it comes to something infinite, perfect, divine; and when it is come thither, it most plainly professes it can go no further, it being impossible to exceed absolutely perfect and infinite.

Thus it is in the general, and thus it is in this particular case, *viz.* in the quest it makes after the highest cause of evil,

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it cannot stay till it discovers God ; it cannot be still lower, nor stir higher than him ; the under-scale of things serves only to lead up to him.

For though all things are indeed formidable from their power to hurt ; yet if they cannot move themselves, but are guided by a superior hand , we must go up to that, ere we understand the head of our unhappiness: when we find this to be God, who is a Being infinitely good, we know he afflicts not willingly, he is displeased & angry because of sin, which puts the Soul into a necessary agony of seeking reconciliation with him.

The being of man is so lovely to him, that he cannot but desire to preserve it; and yet the well-being of this being is so much more desirable, that he had rather quit it , then retain it miserable: From hence arise those fears and suspicions we have of every thing , which our reason and experience tell us can do us injury : but our greatest fear must needs be of the greatest evil , the wrath of God. For it is the fear of a power above us, that can reach us at pleasure, that is always present to us , that comprehends

prehends all ways of punishment, so that it cannot be prevented or impeded, nor can we save any thing from it : when a man draws out himself to a longer Being, and finds himself consigned for Eternity, the knowledge of God eternal in his wrath, continues his fears to that Eternity ; there being the subject and principle of this wrath coeval.

It is palpably vain to enter a Covenant with little and petite powers of evil, to make our peace by, when this greatest is infecured; whole power is, as the Heavens to the Earth, that flows round about it, and compasses it every way. But when a man is at peace with God, the whole body of evil is settled, commanded, and composed.

The Scripture therefore to correct our vain fears, and to guide that passion or affection of fear aright, goes down to the very center of it, and with truest wisdom explains to us the great object of it, God, and that first Mover of all misery, his wrath and displeasure, the suspension of which is the quiet of the world, the removal of it our eternal consolation.

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It is therefore of greatest necessity we make our peace with him ; for then we have a league with all : before this every whisper and rustle, every noise of danger alarms our quiet ; yea, the very surmises we have of unknown powers, those very unshapely and inconsistent suspicions affright us, because we are so placed, that we are ever offered at by danger ; the waves are always rolling towards us, and we can never be truly quiet, till we are reconciled to him, who says to these proud waters, Hither shall ye go, and no further.

Reconcilement with God lyes in a most wise and ponderous method of things ; for he being the highest reason, and not a force or power only, the purest Holiness and Righteousness, and not a meer irresistible strength, our safety stands in agreement with those Attributes, according to which he governs every thing, and seeing he is also infinite in beneficence and Grace, we have the advantage of all expectations from that Grace, either as it is impressed upon our minds, together with the apprehensions we have of a God, or more
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clearly discovered in the Gospel; the declarations of which are always ready to unite with those secret intimations in mans Soul, conveyed thither for this very purpose.

The fundamental peace of a man lyes in his conformities to God in Holiness and Goodness, without which it is hardly possible for it so much as to imagine its peace after cold consideration of it, there being no overthrowing so deep a sense, as conscience hath of this; for it arises from the most intimate persuasions we have of God, as a Nature infinitely pure, and those we have also of our own Souls, whose due perfection and accomplishment is a participation of the divine Nature, or likeness; and therefore from the correlation between God and the Soul, flows that pertinacious exaction of the Soul from it self, that it be good and holy, that it may have peace with God.

But because the Soul finds so much disorder and contrariety in it self to that awful Law, so many transgressions against it, that cannot be undone; it can have no rest here, but needs some-

Something that may countervail that guilt within it. There can be none so convenient, so great and potent, as the pardoning mercy of God in Jesus Christ, who by his obedience to death in our Nature, carries up the supreme forgiveness of God.

Yet this not exhausting that Principle and perswasion of the Soul, that it must be inwardly good; it is most necessary the Doctrine of pardon by a Saviour should be filled with a Spirit and influence of Holiness, that this grace may not seem prostituted, is an indulgence to sin.

Thus the foundations of our peace stand upon the free Grace of God, and sincerity of Holiness, as an evidence we are within the compass of that Grace: To assure which, the very same Spirit of Holiness, alone able to diffuse the comforts of this peace, comes in and anoints the Soul with the Joy of it, till it enters into the full possession of Salvation, which is the final acquittal from evil.

Evil may in the mean time be used for chastisement, and higher inticement

to Holiness; but loses its sting, when that Justice that armed it, is satisfied.

Thus a man acting upon the Principles of his own mind; when he finds himself oppressed with evil, is led into the Doctrine of Christianity; for observing the hand-writing upon himself, he reads God the Author of affliction; hence flows the sense of sin, since God afflicts not without cause: sense of sin and the displeasure of God upon it, makes it necessary to inquire after the Doctrine of pardon and repentance. These are nowhere in their Oriency, but in the Gospel of Jesus Christ: The Doctrine of pardon and peace carry a man into expectations of good from God. This being not found here, the Soul is sent to the promises of Eternal life, made known and brought to light by Christ. These give joy in tribulations, and hope of the Glory of God. This crowns the Soul; and sets it triumphant over all evil in the world.

But then this can give us no true sense or construction of the great miseries of our condition, nor with reason cluck us out of them into so much as the discourse of lasting rest and safety. The

The Soul of man so busie as it is, first to inquire the reasons of its unhappiness, then to find the remedies of it, hath great advantage of accepting that truth which tells it all that is within it concerning these things, and explains them so far, that it finds it self at the very utmost ends of these wonders, and to have as much made known of them, as is to be known.

Thus out of the eater comes forth meat and sweetness, out of evil considered by the mind of man, either acting its own reason, and securing it self the best it can against what it cannot remove, or turning it self upon those Principles ingrafted within it, that lead it to the source and Antidotes of misery: Both which convey it to the Discipline of Jesus Christ, as the true relief of humane condition, and its infelicity.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the more direct operations of Judgments towards Reformation; wherein first of the efficacy they have in confining Sensuality, and setting free Conscience, and its proper Motions.

I Et us now approach the considerations of the more immediate powers of Judgment.

1. They give a notable rebuke and abatement to sense, and the sensual temper; Judgments trouble all the air sensuality hath to breathe in, and make it dark; they pour out their vial upon its Sun, and a night ensues, so that it every where meets terrour and disappointment, which bring it low, and enfeeble it. Now this is that sensuality that overgrows at once the proper motions of a Soul and Conscience, and that spiritual world, with which the converses of a spirit most properly lye. When this is wind-bound, and brought to an ebb, either through the hand of God upon the

the body, the primary seat of it, or those external objects that feed and minister to it, immediately the mind that lay in a swoon, and oppressed, emerges, and rises up. It hath its opportunity, and uses its freedom; through the great clefts and rents the strokes of God make in this vail and cloud, the Soul espies the spiritual world, the shadow of the material one removing off by reason of these commotions caused by Judgments.

The great accounts of mans sin and impenitency lye in the deep plunges and immersions of his Soul into sense, and sensual things, wherein he grows immoderate above the beasts, through the vigours of an immaterial and immortal Spirit dissevered from its true objects and natural motions, and carried down this stream; From whence retaining all its own force, but misguided, it grows extreamly foul, while it at once neglects heavenly and spiritual things for which it was made, boldly transgresses all rules of goodness, and cuts its way through every thing to its impure satisfactions.

The light that is true and pure, is kept from all approach to it, and its own native exercise is suppressed; whence it comes to pass, that God and Eternal things are covered from it, and as it were wholly blotted out, it lives in the unclean pleasures of the body, which have all the influence and sway upon it.

But awakened by the Judgments of God, the Soul inquires after its own world, and meets it every where; God having graciously disseminated it into every thing within it, and without it, even as the open eye in the day time, greets the light where ever it goes.

That great deal of sensual noise and business, being made to cease, the false light being put out, and the windows, out of which lust looks, dammed up, the Soul hath nothing else to do; it finds leisure then to do like it self, and is even provoked to it by its own force, carrying it always upon action, and when it is taken off from that to which it is only inclined, it returns upon its proper motion; when the noises of Chariots and their jumping wheels, the sounds of musick, the light of candles, as in the
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overthrow of Cities, are removed, in
 that stilness Conscience is heard; in that
 silence of foolish fires, purer rays shine
 upon the Soul: For the beams of truth,
 and the distinct voice of it fall every
 where, were there but an eye and ear
 to receive and take them in. On the
 other side, the capacities of the Soul are
 always fitted to them, and were they not
 importuned, and incumbred by other
 things, they would be continually open-
 ing to, and earnestly expecting them.
 Heavenly light and knowledge, like
 God and his Providence, is both within
 by its intimate diffusion of it self, and
 without every thing in the world by its
 own unmeasurableness, and so cannot
 be covered; but because those organs
 that are to observe, and work by it, are
 disabled, and turned another way, and
 because men use every art, and make
 all kind of vails and shuts between
 themselves and this spiritual light, the
 Judgments of God make a collision up-
 on the faculties of the Soul, upon which
 the sparks hid within flye out, and there
 is a forced kind of light, in order to
 that which is more natural and continu-
 ing;

ing ; a great flame oft arising out of this little fire.

Although if the heart of man were not so thick in its insensibleness of God, and the powers of it that should tend towards him, afar off from him, there were no such violence necessary in the case : But things being as they are, there can be no fairer opportunity presented to man to recover himself out of the snare of sensual things, or the profound launches of his Soul into them, then these severities of affliction, which bridle the appetite in himself, and render ungrateful, or remove out of his reach the very things he lusts after ; for if the pain be in the body, the Soul is filled with so dolorous a resentment from it, that nothing appears fair to it ; when man is chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, his Soul abhorreth bread, and his life dainty meats. If the Judgment of God lyes on the pleasures of sense without, it immediately enters within, through the famine that presses, or through the very anguish inflicted upon it by the contrariety of natural causes,

causes ; so that either way, it is made to sit alone and keep silence. In which interval rush in the thoughts of God, and the obedience we owe to him ; a sense that we are made for greater things ; the excellency of peace with God , and likeness to him ; our relation to Eternity : in all which lye the most potent arguments to goodness, which when they meet upon an irregular and unreformed estate , fill the Soul with the sorrow that works into repentance, and a zeal of recovering it self to a better condition.

For the inconvenience that sense feels in these pressures, when the goodness of God is retreated, and the hand of his displeasure stretched out, is so great, that it enters into the very reason, and provokes that to inquire the cause ; even as the delights of sense distil upon the mind, and close it up in a soft slumber, and in apprehensiveness of it self, and what is truly its interest, fascinated with other pleasures : In the mean time it exacts of it, all its sagacity and vigour to be employed in continuing and enlarging those fructions : So the discon-

tents

tents of the same sense pierce into the Soul, and putting it into an agony, call it up to another kind of exercise, the consideration of the complaints it offers.

Now though while the bed was easie, it was content to lye down, and forget every thing; yet when it misses of this, and grows full of losses, and is set to examine how this comes to pass, by degrees it returns like the Prodigal in want to it self. Its first inquiries and determinations stay as long as they can upon natural causes; it undertakes and endeavours to solve things upon those Principles: but being urged by the case it self, and its own temper to search further, it is sent from one thing to another, till within the inmost fold of things, it finds a divine Justice, and upon it is resolved into a conscience, and lays together the great obligations of repentance and humiliation.

By this light a man hath quite another sense of sin, and the evil of it; those actions he passed so favourably or carelessly upon, have much a more ghastly and dreadful appearance. Thus God
excites

excites a man to take a just account, and make a righteous judgment of his own actions, and to call that into suspicion he never questioned before. It is meet to be said unto God under chastisement, I have done iniquity, but will offend no more. That which I see not, teach thou me. He searches and tries his ways, that he may turn to God.

For Judgments carrying with them the most close and sensible instructions of the displeasure of God, convey also the quickest reasons of self-examination, of repentance, and change of a man's course, to those who are neither sunk down to a brutish or *Pharaoh*-like impenitency, nor risen up to the more heroic state of one chusing Holiness for it self, and not of love. For man having an affection of fear, it is impossible he should not turn it upon that which is most dreadful, when it appears to him; or that that fear should not excite him to the removal of the danger; the first of which is founded in that Law of Nature, that every affection turns to the supreme object understood with greatest intention; the second in that of self-

self-preservation : For the first , it is certain the wrath of God is most terrible, it being most commanding, and pursues a man beyond the most formidable of evils, death, which is therefore so, because in the opinion of Nature it swallows all sense of Being ; now sense of Being is the foundation of pleasure and delight : but this keeps a man in the jaws of that second death , which eternally ruminates upon him. Our Saviour spoke highest reason; Fear not them that kill the body, and have no more that they can do ; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear, Fear him, that after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell : I say unto you, Fear him. For the removal of this danger , there is nothing conscience is more authoritative in then this ; There can be no firm atonement with God , nor so much as expectation of good from him without repentance or reformation ; it ever appearing most unreasonable to it , that God should give any ear to him that regards iniquity in his heart.

To conclude this ; conscience that is the most vigorous of all a mans powers,
being

being collected and congregated of the strength of all , and acting upon those Principles that every man knows to be the most concerning , if true ; and instead of demonstration for the truth of its grounds , hath this advantage , that they are deeply rivetted into the heart , so that though there may be a stupefaction , yet there can be no obliteration. Against this stupefaction Judgments come , making legible those Characters which at other times we dissemble , and are as the fire to some sort of writing , that makes apparent what was not before discerned.

CHAP. XIV.

*Of Sense of particular Sins effected by
by Judgments.*

2. **U**NDER Judgments there is a sense of particular sins , which reverberated upon the Soul by it self , thus incouraged and invivened by the presence of a divine Justice assisting it , is of all things most astonishing , prostrates the Soul , and submits it to any terms of obedience in hope of Grace.

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A man thus affected, feels the deadly stroke in that strength of his Soul, that is to bear him up in every infirmity (that is) the spirit of a man, which when it is wounded, what can uphold it, that it self carried all?

This is the power that poises every evil; and judges of the spring from which it rises, the extent of its virtue; the effects and ends it is to reach: And then compares with the evil the strength that is necessary to oppose it, the means of prevention, the proper allays in enduring it; if it cannot be avoided, the efficacies of removal; according to all which, that native courage and resolution keeps it self upright, and sinks not under the evil. But what can it do? when the evil is so great, that there is no match between all that the Soul can find either to protect or rescue it, and that this very spirit of it falls split; as with a shaft of Thunder, is so dissolved and melted, that it is ready to take any new shape, having no further consistency in that, formerly its own.

Now it is most evident, an infinite wrath is too great for allay or remedy;

too constant for removal ; all valour and resolution against an infinite evil, is first madness and foolish hardiness, before it comes, and when it is felt, either softens into extream despondency, or rages into despair.

That which breaks the spirit of a man thus, is not yet simply the evil, or the infiniteness of it, but its failure in that which is its strength, *viz.* innocence and freedom from guilt ; without which it can never be truly great, and when it finds the want of this, it sinks oppressed with its own weight.

Judgments are like the Rack to the Soul, which work it to unbosom it self within it self, as men are tortured into the confessions that they would else most earnestly have suppressed. *Josephs* brethren at such a time confessed among themselves the sin they had so long hid from their own Souls as well as others.

Thus rise up particular sins, leading into the universal foulness and obnoxiousness of the whole state, so that if a man should offer to retire into himself, he feels he is pursued into his very heart, and yet finds no Sanctuary there, when

he would be quiet in his innocency, and that is gone; this is the profoundest abasement of a man.

Thus God girds us with our sins, and fills our bowels with our guilt, and even soaks our bones with our wickedness, as with oyl, till all we endure is no less our own Justice upon our selves then Gods.

This begets in a man earnestest desires of mercy from him, without whom we cannot be merciful to our selves: This makes repentance and returns to goodness, as necessary to the Soul for its peace with it self, as it is for its peace with God.

For all the sentences of God, when ever they come into execution, propagate themselves, and beget the very same in the sinner himself; who if he could but comfort himself with his integrity, would with far more ease suffer from a power above him, though unjust to him.

A virtuous man conscious of nothing, but rectitude and sincerity, stands unshaken in that, and values his untainted mind above the Tyrants spotted greatness, however he lye at the power of it,

But

But whither should he flye, that feels so great a severity from himself, but out of himself into the arms of mercy, and to the re-innocency of repentance?

Into the arms of that mercy which is superior to the natural compassion of a man to himself, and to that re-innocency of repentance, the only refuge of the Soul when vexed, and pursued with its guilt, and the self-aborrencies springing from it, which make it intolerably weary of its own thoughts, and retorted looks upon its state.

That supreme Goodness, that first drives a man out of his sins by these interior perplexities into the necessities of repentance (for who can endure himself in that foulness his eye is continually upon?) hath also prepared the same repentance to be the pleasant and consolatory retirement of it, in which it returns into a reconciliation with it self, even as with God through Jesus Christ.

CHAP. XV.

Of Judgments exciting Prayer.

3. **A**LL anguishes of the Soul, either from its outward trouble, or those internal afflictions from the sense of sin, do most naturally run out into Prayer and address to God. Whoso gives them not that vent, restrains and forcibly imprisons so free and inclinable a motion of his own Soul. These desires towards God and his mercy, when they are cloistered in fullen and irreligious breasts, like strong liquors confined against their will, or like the earnest winds that cannot endure their prison, find some out-let to themselves, so that sometimes upawares, sometimes extorted invocations of highest goodness, have come from them who have studiously compressed those their most genuine sentiments; but not only from the truly humble and religious breast, but even from unprejudiced Nature they have much a greater liberty, and take their free course. Now no mans Soul
goes

goes out to God for relief in misery, but it hath some considerations of those great Principles that make such a motion reasonable; and of such attendants of these desires that may make the address to God decent and honourable: All which concenter in the necessary change of the heart and life. If he that wrought a miracle in Christs Name could not lightly speak evil of him, with how great an impropriety doth that man approach God and his Goodness, who intends a continued defiance to him by his sins? How doth he brand down that sense of divine mercy leading to repentance, the consideration of which gives him leave to hope well from God?

This then shews the advantage of affliction, in which these motions of the Soul to God are as natural as the very desires of relief simply considered; all are ready to visit God in affliction, and to pour out a prayer when his chastning is upon them. God makes no doubt of a very bad sort of men, that in their affliction they will seek him early: It being the highest act of impenitency Da-

niel complains of in his time, and the seventh seal of their Judgment, that they made not their prayer to God, that they might turn from iniquity, and understand his truth. The powers of mens Souls are never in a more fading condition, nor their sins in greater violence then when they call not upon God, nor stir up themselves to take hold of him.

CHAP. XVI.

A Recollection of this Discourse to its proper purpose.

THIS Discourse of the efficacies of Judgment, we have so placed, that it is most applicable to particular persons; but when they have a due effect there, they do from single breasts conspire into a general air, especially when they affect the hearts of personages that are of power and example, from them they result upon whole bodies of people, and give at least some tincture to the state of times, that they become more sober, and of a better inclination. For there is apparently a Genius and temper

temper of an Age, even as there is of persons, and a common constitution of a Nation, as of one man, which is also capable of such kind of alterations in Morality, as in single men, which are produced by the Cardinal changes that fall out in and upon them.

Yet seeing no man can determine what this will be (that is) whether the Age he lives in will be reformed by Judgments, when it hath so far corrupted, as to make it self the seat of them: seeing these general amendments grow not upon private men, nor so much as upon lesser fraternities, except as they meet in greater incorporations, or spring from the highest branches of Principality, which as in the tree inverted, are indeed the roots of all publick associations, and most often of their manners.

That being then incertain to us that is out of our power, it is good for every man to look well to the state of his own Soul; that if he find not any exemption from the common evil, yet he may be inrolled in eternal mercies, which is a Cabinet always removed from the possibilities

bilities of danger : and indeed these powerful operations of Grace are most designed to the eternal happiness of man, even when they pass through these austerer methods, wherein God is very good ; for if he takes the present state, and moulds it any way for our everlasting peace and life, it is an act of infinite mercy. All true goodness hath its present use in this world ; it honours God, makes the best composure of the Soul, offers a blessing to the world now ; but it doth not like the creatures of time, determine it self here : It doth not as those faint things breathe out and dye, but shines a light in the world, keeping the most perverse and crooked generation from utter darkness, and is at last translated from hence to a higher Orbe of Glory and eternal lustre, but never suffers extinction.

No man then loses by his reformation, or the good effect of evil, though through general obstinacy in wicked ways, the Judgment goes on, and he dyes in the common calamity ; for to fit men for enjoyment of prosperity here, is but a contingent end of affliction,

tion, eternal blessedness is only certain to it.

While good men are thus provided for, the refractoriness of the Age or other particular persons, is no disproof of the usefulness of Judgments, any more then that many dye under the methods of Physick, is an argument against so worthy a Science. When men under the hand of God have nothing worthy repentance rising in them, 'tis deadly. As when a Physician purges, yet the distemper continues, and the blood is still impure after frequent Phlebotomy; for it argues all is discust, the whole mass is corrupted, and nothing to be purged, but what is it self; for impurity still swims up after all evacuations. God is weary of striking impenitents in order to a cure; they must dye as those in whom Nature hath no resistance to make against the prevailing distemper; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, and those powers perished, that should be aided by medicine: The principles of recovery that are as the handles by which God apprehends the Soul, are lost by great obdurances in sin, & men

men dye like beasts under those strokes, of which they understand no more, then that they oppress them.

This is that irremediable malady of sin, whereof Nations and persons dye, and are written upon, as *Abaz* that trespassed more under Gods hand, This is that King *Abaz*.

CHAP. XVII.

An Enquiry into the Freedom of God in his distribution of Judgments; with a solution of doubts concerning it.

WE have thus far endeavoured to speak the reason of Scripture, touching the Judgments of God, which are all holy, just, and good, faithful to his own Glory, and the true interest of the world. There remains nothing within our present intention, that may either establish, or clear from the objections raised against it, this grand Position; That all the evils we endure are righteous Judgments of God; but to reconcile with it the liberty and arbitration God uses in over-looking and pas-

passing by some times and persons that are free from those strokes, upon which yet the main reasons of Judgments we have assigned, are concurrent.

This is first to be resolved into the uncontrollable Counsel of God, who giveth no such account of his matters; but that his paths are still hid in the Sea, and his foot-steps in the great waters. This we know, he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works, what he does is therefore to conclude our thoughts; who being but upon the skirts and borders of knowledge, understand much more what is fit to be done, by what we see him do, then by our own conjectures, which if not so bounded, are vain, and rove incertainly in the wild of things. His actions are the great marks by which our understandings are to be guided, that they may not dangerously miscarry. If then we observe a void place of Judgments, let us rebuke our own apprehensions (when we take upon us to think it fit, Justice should there have planted it self) with the acknowledges of the Dominion it hath over all times and persons; when

when we see its displays in the world, we may then understand God is giving some present check to sin, and its grassy impurity, that carries such efficacies along with it, as seem meet to himself.

But though we thus ascribe greatness to God, yet may we secondarily observe those moments of satisfaction we receive out of his Word, and the reason of it, which are enough to answer any scruples concerning the non-appearance of his Justice in a season, when it seems requisite it should be seen, and to free us out of that maze of doubts that falls in therewith, *viz.* the inequality of his dealings either with good men, compared with evil men, or towards good and evil men, compared each sort among themselves; for when either the evil pass peaceably through, and out of the world, and feel no bands in their death; but good men have waters of a full cup wrung out unto them; or when one good man hath the candle of God shining in his Tabernacle, washes his steps in butter, and bath the Rock pouring out oyl to him; and another,

another, though fearing God, eats in darkness all his days, disconsolate either with publick or private calamities: or lastly when one evil man fares wel in the common prosperity, and another of the same stamp is covered with a cloud all his days, either in the general adversity or his particuler infelicity; there is an appearance of partiality: and seeing all of both qualities arrive each at their own ends, any solution taken from those ends seems insufficient. All these are so many scandals to this Doctrine, which yet true reason of Scripture plentifully removes. There is enough too to resolve us, how the disadvantage of living out of the discipline of affliction, is recompensed to those, who possibly had they lived under it, would have repented in sack-cloth and ashes.

All these, I say, to him who reverences Gods Ark, is wisely conversant in the things revealed, that pertain to us, and repines not that the dark waters and thick clouds of the sky are Gods Pavillion; are so far unridled, that he finds the benefit of that promise; The
humble

humble he will guide in Judgment, and the meek he will teach his way: the secret of the Lord is communicated with them that fear him; for he leads them into more, who expect his admission, then they can obtain, who cutting their way to themselves, ravish the cloud of an empty imagination; when they most please themselves with what they think they have found out and comprehended. The Scriptures speak wisdom, but not the wisdom of this world, which is brought to nought; not that which he rowres into, who is vainly puffed up with his fleshly mind; but that which is to sobriety: let us then measure by the line of it to these foregoing thoughts, to which it reaches, so as to bring them into subjection.

I. As to the Justice of God it can have no injury, because there is an Eternal Judgment, so high and substantial, that it doth infinitely honour, satisfy, and recompense whatever Justice can seem to suffer. Nothing is under a necessity to shew it self, but that which is confined to such a moment; and if it loses that, lyes hid for ever. Things which

which are poor, that have only an appearance, and not a retired treasure, are in haste to be known; small revenges are hastily executed, but *nullum in tempore occurrit Regi*. The deep waters run silently, and what hath Eternity to give it room and space, slumbers not, though it make no present noise; God hath the highest reasons of his patience, the perfect strength of his Being, and the vastness of everlasting Ages to explain himself and his displeasure in. All opinions of men against him and his Judiciary Providence, vanish like a dream when he appears, for his coming constrains belief, commands full assent, and nothing contrary dares then be seen; nor can it be traced, but in that horror and condemned disappointment, to which it hath betrayed the masters of it.

The apprehensions that have footing only in time, are not to be valued; for time it self is so little and inconsiderable a thing, that though it is greater or less, when it is measured by its own line, yet it is but the dust of the ballance, the drop of the Bucket, nothing, & less then

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nothing when it is set by Eternity; when any immortal Being, especially the prime Being, who only hath immortality, hath the grasping of it, it is squeezed to nothing: while it is within it self, judged by its own Rules, and the creatures of it, it is somewhat; but to God the Grandeur and pride of it a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night; the contempt God and his Justice endure from it; as soon as ever it sinks into Eternity, are as if they had never been; one glance of that Judgment immediately consumes it.

This consideration doth also abundantly remove the inequalities of time, if we suppose them never so great, and level good men among themselves, and bad men among themselves; and so precisely distinguishes good and bad one from another; that there remain no possible remembrances of the state of this world, nor any thing that should call in question, or diminish ought from the clearness of Gods dealing. Eternal rewards and punishments swallow up all distinctions of time, which hereupon
become

become no more then imagination or opinion, when true Judgment takes place ; or then thought and fancy, when knowledge and reality enter ; the pleasures and happineſſes, the torment and complaint of it are all gone ; all that is great in time is the manner and temper of an immortal Spirit in and upon it, which is an inhaſement of Eternity into it, and makes it valuable for the ordinableneſs of it to an everlaſting condition of things : all of it elſe is but like infancy and child-hood, compared with manly eſtate ; that is vanity and folly : whatever puerile age ſeems to it ſelf, it is known to have nothing worthy in it, but the beginnings and dawns of that mind, which education improves, and ripens to a ſtrength in elder years, for which it is formed : The contempt it hath of ſeverer Judgment, detracts nothing from the ſolidity and dignity of true reaſon, but is imputed to its ſillineſs and imperfection ; the pleasures of it are condemned, as unworthy a man. The very ſame Soul cenſures, and even deſpiſes it ſelf in its childiſh eſtimations, diſcourſes and

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actions ;

actions, when it feels it self man, and remembers them not but with dislike or compassionate scorn. If after-time then blots out the things fore-going with so strange an oblivion; if manhood doth so efface past child-hood, and death yet expunges much more then these, how exceedingly more doth another world wipe out all things pertaining to this? Moralities only remaining, and transmitted through all without loss; from whence accrues to good men greater glory through their sufferings, and increase of torment to the evil from their pleasures, with which they are upbraided hereafter; and very probably each of these arising to both sorts, proportionable to the difference they have met with here in the world.

Further, different presences of God, and the consolations of his Spirit, may be a present reward to good men in the worst times; service of God, even to a kind of Martyrdom, speedier translations to Heaven, greater degrees of Honour, and blessed Immortality, are much better to them then an ease and quiet, that must within such a number
of

of years expire however : Even afflictions of conscience , and longer heaping up guilt and wrath , may make it less tolerable for evil men , who have lived in prosperous times , then for others of the same kind , who have been preserved from so much sin , and awakened to some sense of God by adversity , their present trouble thus lessening an eternal punishment , except to those who have been brawned to a greater contempt of God , and hardened in the fire against him , whose case deserves no consideration .

From all which we see , there is no such necessity upon God to punish now , nor any so complainable inequality in his distributions to good and bad men . For when either of these ranks of men know themselves in that unchangeable state , they will reflect upon nothing in time , but as it hath paid something to Eternity , and conveyed thither what remains and abides . If then any thing aggrandizes that happiness , or asswages that misery , however it hath been resented with grief and deploration here , it is then put on as a crown ,

or applyed as a Lenitive to pain; but that which is blessed with no addittament of Glory, is laid aside as worthless, how pleasant soever in the world; and that which inflames torment, always bewailed, though it was carried as a priviledge here. All things else lose themselves more perfectly in that state, then whatever we can imagine most trivial here, when it is utterly out of date, and succeeded by a contrary, however it presumed before in the moment of its flourish.

With this Judgment then God infinitely assoils his Justice, from the scoffes of men that say, When is the promise of his coming? from the sensuality of men that put the evil day far from them: with this he divides the world, that all may discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that feareth and serveth God, and the prophane and him that serveth him not. By this he adjusts to every of both these their due portion, honour to whom honour, stripes to whom stripes, with their degrees and number; however they lye huddled now, and the best oft-times in the

the darkest place. And this Judgment is plentifully declared to the world, that every one may make a right use of it, in giving Glory to God, and prejudging things not against, but with that day. If any do otherwise, he that sits in the Heaven observes their folly, and laughs at it: For he seeth that this day is coming, as he that is sure of his revenge upon a contumacious ingrate, first in compassion warns him, and that rejected with a secret derision, observes him in his foolish boldness, and with a contented patience bears his continued affronts; expecting quietly the season of his punishment: or as a wise man that knows his own grounds in a point of truth, tranquilly rests upon them, and bears with a merciful disdain the clamour of a conceited Opinionist; so God having settled things with an unmoveable Righteousness, and a patience also, that yet carries dread with it, says to those that will not believe such a Judgment, He that is filthy and unrighteous, let him be so still.

2. Whereas God may seem by the suspension of his Judgments, careless of
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that purgation of the world by their present execution, let us observe what other provisions his Holiness, Wisdom, and Goodness have made herein.

1. That Eternal Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, that in one act of offering himself gives that perpetual glory to Justice; that doth not only countervail, but infinitely preponderate and effect more then those daily repeated Sacrifices, or those more solemn ones; to which yet the reason of all the world hath ever made recourse for lustration of themselves.

The life and actions of our Blessed Saviour, of such incomparable innocency & divine perfection, hath set Holiness at such an elevation, that no depression of it by the iniquities of men, are at all comparable with the exaltations of it in him. He as our *advocate* hath contracted upon himself all our guilt, and being made a curse for us, hath devoured our curse, and paid an uttermost compensation to punitive Justice. He by a most ChrySTALLINE purity resplendent in our Nature, hath discovered the beauties of Holiness beyond all possible

sible obscurations of ours, the efficacies of which his mediatory negotiation are much clearer in Heaven, the proper Region; whither he carried his merit to be seated in an unintermitted Intercession, and whence he pours down the benefits of it upon Earth.

As God therefore is well pleased, and always smells a savour of rest in Jesus Christ, upon which he cannot only stay his severity, but bless the world without injury to his Justice, or dishonour to his Holiness; so is the world it self seasoned by so great a Sanctity, & perfumed with the odour of it. This indeed eminently is the safety of them that believe, but extends it self to all, for he is the Saviour of all, though especially of them that believe; and tasted death for every man; which therefore avails for the reprieve of those, whom yet it doth not protect from condemnation.

That which relieves good men from eternal sufferings due to sin, with the perfect atonement of Justice and Holiness, can without the offence of those Attributes continue under patience and long-suffering those, that at the last,
 O 4 through

through impenitency , pay themselves to the glory of vengeance in the day of wrath.

3. Under the wing of this Priesthood lye the humiliations, obediences, and intercessions of gracious men, who are also the Priests of the world , and obtain pardon upon Earth in the virtue of the Mediator in Heaven. They who giving God no rest day or night, prevail for mercy , and live the Horsemen and Chariots of *Israel*, the great security and defence of their Country, of which when any City or Nation is naked, they are immediately the prey of Justice ; their Righteousness being from the Grace of God, a salt that preserves their time from putrefaction. To this we may subjoyn the happiness of some times, that are fuller of the days of the Son of Man (that is) have clearer effusions of the Gospel and Divine Truth upon the world ; which carrying a sway upon the consciences of men , give universal estimation to God and his ways , and have a train of moral Virtues attendant ; which may make general Judgments less necessary vindications of contemporary

porary sins, and may at least delay Judgments till after-times. Examples of which we observe in Sacred Story.

Lastly, we have already said, instances of Judgment do not breathe out themselves in the present moments, nor so much as in the present Age; but derive themselves upon following time, and are accepted for such a period: Like the great expiation, that in one day purged the whole year. In all times there are yet foot-steps of Judgment, though in more private and retired walks that continually fall out, like those Sacrifices that were daily offered, though of less solemnity, and those that were appointed in particular cases of a more ordinary occurrence.

3. If it seem the disadvantage of any time, that it is not disciplined by these chastisements; we must know, that Judgments are not equal with those Ordinances of God, or like his Word, that have in their institution an immediate accommodation to such ends; but are useful through the intervening instruction of that Law that God teaches out of, when he chastises; without

out which men dye under those strokes unreformed. Other courses of Providence have also their witness of God, and peculiar fitnesses to be managed by his truth to the ends of conversion and repentance ; for thither the patience and goodness of God lead, attempered to the more ingenuous Elements of mans Soul , that are touched with the magnetisms of love : Even as Judgments take care of those that are moved by fear , and therefore have their operation in the more corrupted parts of degenerate Nature.

To sum all: Suspension of Judgments is a beautiful place in the contexture of Providence , and illustrates that Being to us, whom we know in the various discoveries of himself , but chiefly in his goodness, which yet would be unknown, if he did not thus administer things : His patience and long-suffering in which he so much delights, would be covered ; the loving kindness he exercises in the Earth , and the tender mercies wherewith he fills it, would be concealed, so that his present Government would want that considerable piece of honour,

honour, which it especially chuseth and prefers it : For his mercy rejoyceth against Judgment, and accordingly he hath taken care these kinder Attributes should have fairest impressions on mans Soul, and be the clearest testimonies of him ; whereas Judgment being his strange act, hath lesser prints of it on our hearts, and raises doubts concerning him. No man wonders, or is in amaze at the goodness and benignity of God, whenever he hears it ; but is startled at his severity, and calls for his saddest thoughts to resolve it into the sinful and guilty state of man.

Without this gracious Manu-tenency there could be no condition of things ; Kingdoms and Empires could grow up to no flourish, nor settle in any greatness ; the prosperity of them, which is so great a glory of Providence, were an impossibility ; the whole Scene would represent nothing but Judgments, till all run into an universal desolation, and many of the most remarked methods of Judgment it self lost ; most of the freer motions of mans will had been concluded and shut up by them which afford
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so large a ground to Providences both of Mercy and Judgment. God as an Instance of his Justice essayed the use of an universal destruction in the Flood of *Noah*, when he repented he had made man, as if he had done a dishonour to his own Holiness, in bringing forth a Nature that should defile it self, and all it touched : and that he might relieve against a mischief as it were unexpected, and right himself, makes haste to destroy that degenerate Nature, with the parts of the Creation most used and corrupted by it.

But then, as if he disallowed the experiment, determines against it for the future, and restores the seeds of mankind he had to that purpose preserved, to much of their former condition, and renews the Charter of their Dominion over the Creatures.

This piece of Sacred History represents to us in a Land-skip (thus flourished to take our apprehensions) this truth, That God with a Salve to that Holiness (in honour to which he delivered things to so great a ruine) would now conserve the world under his patience
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and long-suffering ; and not roll it up any more in an universal devastation, till that greatest and last of Judgments, in which he will absolve the whole Scheme of his Justice, and fill up whatever seems wanting in it now.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the variety God uses in the manner of the execution of his Judgments.

BESIDES the freedom the Supreme Ruler of the world uses, in fixing his Judgments upon some parts of time, and not upon others ; there are also the various kinds and measures of his debates, and the Crisis of them, when they end in destruction ; which to observe, may much further enlarge our thoughts in this Contemplation, and the Duty of it.

As then in Creation God hath formed vast bodies of the same kind, wherein we see a great deal of one thing together, by which he teaches us that immense power that never spends it self ; so hath he also multiformed his produ-

productions into an endless variety, that we may behold that infinity of understanding, that is not tyed to one shape of things.

Thus his Judgments are sometimes cast into one Element, or Globe of fire, swelling like the huge mountains, covering all like a great Deep; such were those on *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, on the old world; teaching us Justice is not poor in any of its revenges: Again it uses several lesser, and diverse evils, that we may know every thing is ready to its purposes of wrath, and carries stings of punishment against sinners.

Both these sometimes are single, made up intire in themselves, solitary Wars, Plagues, Famines; at other times they meet together in one great Configuration, and are constellated. Lastly, sometimes they rise up to their height, as it were in an instant; at other times they are ordered into a train and succession: and this being the most ordinary Tenour of Judgments, and with which we of this Nation have been much acquainted, let us reflect more freely upon it, At

At such a time the hand of God keeps upon the Table, and his operations are like several limbs of a body, that are drawn one after another, and then the whole seen; or like a suit of Hangings wrought by their pieces, and then placed together, or unfolded by degrees, and the whole at last presented; or like an excellent Discourse that passes out of the mind in single sheets, and then meets in the intire Work; or like the Creation, that by the steps of six days came to its Sabbath.

Thus Gods procedure upon *Pharaoh* was by a gradation of Judgment, that compleated its figure in a succession. The Angel in the Revelation proclaimed a woe to the world, because of the Angels yet to sound: and one woe made haste, that another to come quickly might have place. As *Ezekiels* waters, they rise higher and higher, till they are a River not to be passed over. *Noahs* Flood prevailed by degrees, till every thing perished, that had not an Ark for its safety.

By all these God shews himself; he weighs the hills in scales, and the mountains

tains in a ballance : he makes one Judgment so great, as to fill the Earth with it self. For what can more speak his immensity, He comprehends the dust of the Earth in a measure, that is, he employs little things to great purposes. The dust that is easily scattered, when divided, is yet great and considerable, when gathered to a proportion. Out of the mouth of Babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. Judgments small in themselves, yet gathering to one another, are able to give a final determination to the sum of affairs.

By a succession in Judgments he makes a fairer impression of himself, which is better done by a leisurely proceeding and continuation of his hand, like the rain that distils, and enters deeper then the sudden storms that haste away. Slay them not, lest my people forget : consume them in wrath. God lodges himself in mens Souls when they are still under his rod, whereas a nine days wonder swallows up a sudden execution. Hereby he teaches, as in his Word,

Word, a line here and there, here a little, and there a little. These gradual motions are essays of mans repentance, lesser strokes, being as warnings to prevent greater ; God moves the Pillars of a Nation first, that the concussion felt, may admonish their weakness, when his angry touch is upon them, and every man from his place seek resettlement in his favour : For the words of God finding so little regard, he thinks fit to give them an Emphasis by his Rod, and the accent is still deeper, that it may take the more place ; or if men are incorrigible, and God resolve to settle upon any Age, and make it the Generation of his wrath, he chains into a series the acts of his indignation : It being rarer, that he destroys at once as *Sodom*, upon which no hand had room or space to stay ; but Judgments in their several courses come on into the Battle, and one begins where the last ended, the Locust eating what the Palmer-worm left.

Yet which way soever things fall out at last, God justifies his goodness, and that Philanthropy wherewith he governs humane affairs, by the pauses he

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makes:

makes: For like those averſations of his Glory, from the Temple by degrees in *Ezekiel*, that the Jews moved by them might beſeech his return, ere he quite left them, they ſhew his willingneſs to have the occaſion to retreat.

Even *Sodom* it ſelf had the Avant-carrier of ſo great an overthrow, by the leſſer it ſuffered in the combination of the Kings againſt it; wherein God juſtifies himſelf, that he deſires not the death of ſinners, but that they ſhould turn from iniquity and live.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the great Character of Judgments when they end in deſolation.

THe greateſt Criſis of Judgment is yet to be conſidered in all the courſe of it (that is) when it is to ceaſe in deſtruction; when God begins, and alſo makes ſuch an end, that affliction riſes not up the ſecond time; from which proceed thoſe reſolved changes of the world, emptied out of one veſſel into another; which by ſingle Judgments

ments are only shaken , and time is set upon other Epoches that are to it like new hinges of motion ; as in general from these variations it receives its curious Needle-work : In some parts of it, Judgments and mercies lye intermingled : others beautiful with mercies only ; and lastly , some wholly dark and sad with Judgments.

This Character of Judgments ending in Ruine , is most diligently to be observed, and may be discerned either by the Judgments themselves, or the signs of the times upon which they fall.

I. In themselves they are remarkable , for then they are preceded by those more then ordinary admonitions, from the disturbed Course of Nature, which God hath made as well the Trumpet as the Instrument of Judgment. Signs in the Sun, and Moon, and Stars , Earthquakes , the Sea and the Waves roaring, the Powers of Heaven shaking , gave an Allarm to *Jerusalem's* destruction.

These indications of a common Calamity are often strangely insinuated into the rational Creatures also, causing

distress of Nations , perplexity , mens hearts failing for fear ; there being unknown motions , and discomposures of mens spirits , whereof no account can be assigned , but they are the loosning of that Bridle God keeps upon all things , before he lays the ruins on their necks , and gives judiciary stimulations to them. These God usually sets as Introductions to great Calamities , as Prefaces to huge Volumes , as Portals to great Edifices , or like the musters of the Clouds , and trepidations of the Air before a Tempest , or the unformed motions of dispersed Soldiers , gathering into a body or arms before a Battle : he sends these , as *Elias* before the great and terrible Day of the Lord , giving hereby a state and pomp to those monumentous Judgments , the descriptions of which yield a natural eloquence to the Prophets , taken immediately from things (for pomp and state are the eloquence of things , and most easily pass into words .) This is further discoverable , when Judgments tread on the heels of one another. For God doth not many things in vain , but
intends

Intends to reach some height ; when he is not quiet with the world, but importunes and sollicitates it to a sense ; when he speaks once and twice , he intends something great and considerable ; for he doth not fight as one that beateth the air, but having entred into particulars , at last sums up all in a perfect effect. In *Amos*, when Judgments hung together in so long a line , at last he resolved , Therefore I will do this unto thee: Then lesser Judgments are but the beginnings of sorrows.

Lastly, when God doth strange things without precedent, things that men will not believe, though they were told them, unusual not only in the common course of Providence , which is very smooth, but strange even in his strange paths of Judgment , as it is said of the Plagues of *Egypt*, the like were not before, nor after them any such: God doth not reverse what he hath settled by so great Wisdom and Counsel, with so high a hand, but when he designs greatest alterations.

2. In regard of the times upon which Judgments fall, this Crisis, is then to be feared.

1. When the Age we live in seems the drain & sink of the sins, and evils of former times, where they settle and grow to a head. One Age rolls down upon another, and sinks into the bottom of time, so wickedness shoves it self on, and rests upon a center. Of this Generation shall be required all the blood that was shed from righteous *Abel* to *Zacharias*. The iniquity of the *Amorites* grows full, which had been some Ages in filling; the Ephah is crowned, and the talent of Lead closes it, and by wings it is hasted to its own Base, that is destruction.

2. When we see people incorrigible, and insensible of Gods hand, keeping their Figure; it is much to be feared Judgments have still more to do to accomplish their own: when things are in a contest, they continue to conflict one with another, till one of them deserts its own mode and station. This cannot fall on an Almighty Justice; for in such encounters great things crush little ones, till they can no longer maintain resistance; and weak things that have a wise instinct or reason, shift them-

themselves every way to avoid the danger. A broken spirit, a melted heart running out of its former shape, cease the controversie betwixt God and Man: but *Pharaohs* heart hardned as the Adamant and steel, held Judgment play till it accomplished it self into that absolute portraicture we read in his History.

3. Injuries done to the Truth and Gospel of God, are sad forebodes of ruinous Judgments; the Ministry of Christ dishonoured was a just preparation of the way to that great destruction of *Jerusalem*, and a highest justification of so severe a stroke. The Gospel honoured is as a wall of fire for defence, and breaks outward upon the enemies of a Nation; when it is despised, it burns inward: It is a pillar of fire, and a cloud of protection when observed; but disregarded, it is a cloud troubled with a Thunderbolt, rolling up and down, and at last flashing out in Lightning to destroy.

Nothing delivers the History of any time so fair to posterity, as an honourable entertainment of a pure and unmixed Religion, giving it the utmost free-

dom to shine as the Sun, to communicate it self as the air, and to run like the Fountains without any interruption : For as these, so the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the common happiness, and necessity of the world, from no Nation of which wherever it had place, hath it used to remove, but it hath carried the honour, and peace residing there with it, as the Glory together with the Ark departed from *Israel*, leaving it as naked of present happiness, as of the hopes of eternal.

CHAP. XX.

The Reduction of the whole to a Conclusion.

Seeing all things of general importance, do most liberally allow themselves to particulars, and enrich them with their abundance; every thing we have asserted of Judgments, is to be measured out in due proportions to this, and that Age : and ours present hath a peculiar Right, because the Judgments of God have made a remark-

markable residence upon it, and these years last past been signed with unusual prints of his Hand.

I doubt not there is prophane wit enough in the world to refuse with scorn whatever shall be offered by addressees much more potent then this ; especially encouraged by any smother motion of affairs, or a peace, the very name of which is laden with the hopes of prosperity.

It is also most true, that whoever in general sets his heart to seek and find out all the Works of God in the world, while he ballances times and seasons, and weighs out prosperity and adversity, shall find much more then he can comprehend ; for the paths of God turn aside suddenly from humane thoughts, and divinations, that a man is still put upon new inquiries, even then when he imagines he hath found. *Solomon* observed, there are that see not sleep day or night, but labour to seek out the Work of God under the Sun, yet they cannot find it ; yea further, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

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Notwithstanding this, we are to mind the times, and the signs of them, every thing being beautiful in its season, and having a fitness in its own place : so that there arise from it such Phases or Characters, which like the Sun. and Moon, and Stars, are for signs and seasons : and in this sense to distinguish days and years ; from whence by the guidance of the Spirit of God, we may discern both time and Judgment, if we are those that fear before him ; while wicked and ungodly men, like fishes and birds, are caught and snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them. Moreover he that observes the Government of the world, shall perceive, as we have already observed, that there is an usual clemency by which God either lays not on his hand when there are great corruptions, or takes it off, and quiets times : and yet no general repentances or amendments, or but very Ceremonial shews of them. This *Jonah* pleaded, as the reason of his disobedience in not publishing the express Revelation of *Nineveh's* ruine. I know that thou art a Gracious God, and
merci-

merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. How incertain then must their conjectures of Gods punishments be, that have no such denunciations to publish?

Yet still upon the grand Principles of the Doctrine of Judgments, we have great cause to apprehend the condition of this Nation.

For first, acknowledging the evils we have felt to be from God; and that we must ascribe them to him, as to the Author; we must also conclude he hath inflicted them upon us with highest reason and design; seeing he can do nothing, but according to that will, which hath an infinite Counsel, more intimate to it then the faculties of reason and will to mans Soul; and the results of which never cleave asunder, as ours do, into those of an understanding rightly guided, and those other of an understanding darkned with passion, and predominated by inordinate appetite.

Now none of the Reasons of Judgment we have given are perfected, but in Reformation, or some consistency of
Judg-

Judgment, that remains as a monument of it so absolute, that it hath no further occasion of moving it self; the triumphs of it glorying over all, except such remnants as resemble the poor people left of the Jews after the Captivation of every thing great into *Babylon*.

The first end is Reformation, without which the snare that is laid shall not be taken up, because nothing is taken by it.

How little Reformation we can pretend to, we are all sufficient witnesses against our selves, and may be judged out of our own mouths. For as the great complaints of humane Nature against it self argue it all in a lapse; so the general out-cryes of the several parties of a Nation against one another, and all against the whole, concerning the inefficacy of Judgments, are strong arguments we are unreformed; there being such a Criterion of these things in the Civil, as there is of the natural body within it self touching its state.

How many of the marks of danger must we needs see upon our selves, in regard of the evils Judgments have
branded

branded us with, and made them the signs of our times : These three last years have stood loaden with so many Judgments, raised like Pyramids upon them.

That of a Plague began the account, wherein the mouth of the Grave opened so wide, as if it would have drawn down all the living. This Hell (as that in the Prophet) enlarged it self without measure, that the multitude might descend into it. Death upon the pale Horse contested for Empire, and Mortality, like a Cloud, spread it self so wide, that it shaded life it self. This hath ever been accounted a Judgment of the first three, an unquestionable messenger of the displeasure of Heaven: the entrance into the Grave by it being not only most dreadful for the voraciousness of it, but most abhorred to humane Nature, for the poyson of that exhalation that annoys the Vaults, and defiles the dust of Death beyond its ordinary loathsomeness.

In the second of these years, God calls to contend by Fire, and it devours as it were the great Deep: This is the usual

usual Emblem of the severest Acts of God; it is the last of Judgments upon the world, to which it is reserved. Scripture oft makes use of a Deluge to signifie destruction by it, God having already used it to so great a desolation of all things: Yet is it less expressive of his utmost indignation, seeing he renewed the state of Earth after it; which is finally destroyed by Fire, and that never quenched is the description of eternal wrath.

With these two run parallel a Naval War, which divine Providence uses as a State-consumption, that is ever insinuating a silent and insensible Fate, besides those noises and slaughters; into which it ever and anon rushes out, that it may give more publick Allarms of death.

This the last year approaches us, like a dying hour, or a last gasp, shewing as it were the common Grave of our Glory, Riches, and Liberty, and cast a blackest cloud upon the time on which it fell, and dwelt with as great a horror on it, as any of the former.

All these made up to the very head and top of the Nation, where they fixed them-

themselves, as if they had that Commis-
 sion to fight neither with small or great,
 but the Metropolis; whither by degrees
 ruines have at other times contended,
 and at last made their rest: But these like
 Apoplectick diseases surprized the Tur-
 ret of Nature at the first, and descended
 with stupefaction upon the whole: And
 though so much hath been still pre-
 served by that Goodness which delights
 not in immediate ruines, as serves to
 administer spirits to the body; yet all
 these are threats of what would imme-
 diately ensue, if there were a total op-
 pression of that Magazin of life; every
 offer at which is much more dangerous
 then heavier down-falls upon less noble
 parts, and speak severest intentions of
 that displeasure that cut us so deep in
 that head or one neck.

Lastly, if we should appeal to the
 Prognosticks of the most sober Breasts
 upon the present Scheme of our con-
 dition, would they not be very trem-
 bling? seeing besides the incertainty
 what a day may bring forth, we look
 more like a people reprieved, then re-
 stored and settled.

Yet

Yet greater Symptoms of danger are those our sins discover upon us, and these not softened or mitigated with those things, that may stay off the blow so much as from our own days.

If then we can neither deny those several appearances of Judgment, nor say, that God doth any thing without design, nor plead our own Reformation, how can we but expect the successions of Judgment, till there be some evident determination of things by them, which yet may be hid and concealed in a present Truce: under the favour of which our affairs may essay a motion back to their rest, and that bosom of peace, which when it is firm, opens to receive all publick and private Interests into it self, that there they may be cherished after a long languor.

It is sufficiently known; Judgments may intermit, and suspend themselves though they intend their own retrieve, as a snare is taken up that hath taken nothing, that it may be more conveniently placed, and at a better time: Or as a Discourse that hath several full points, and yet begins afresh, till the whole be com-

completed ; or like the Cockatrice springing from the root of the Serpent, that seemed dead. For the Judgments of God take their own leasure, and discover themselves at such distances of time as seem meet to them, sporting as it were with humane affairs, yet always including those benigne and serious morals of patience leading to repentance.

Yea Interposals of mercy may have place, when destruction shall yet be the last act. Thus *Israel* delivered from *Egypt*, was in that Generation destroyed in the Wilderness. *Hoseah's* Prophecy of the final Captivity of the ten Tribes, took its beginning under the Reign of *Jeroboam* the Second, wherein that Kingdom was in a hopeful posture.

We our selves have seen the state of our Nation, triumphing back to its own Center, where alone it could be supposed to stay, and fix after so long, and uneasy an Anarchy ; and yet how soon have we seen it trembling upon that very Center, and full of new perplexity ?

If mercies then leave us insecured, what will any of the vain confidences and good hopes of men avail, which we

See in no case can ward from evil, but as refuges of lyes surrender themselves, and the persons intrusted to them to that overflowing scourge, that passes along and sweeps before it; for things of reality, and grounded upon certain causes, keep their way, and maintain their greatness, never considering whether they are believed, and looked for before-hand or not.

But which way soever it shall please the great Ruler of all things to command our affairs, or what hand soever he shall guide them with, either of mercy or Judgment; we have great reason with attent consideration, to behold either his severity or his goodness, so as to move us home to him: If it should be unexpected, and undeserved goodness, that like a *melior natura* ballances and disposes those seeds of Bourgeois-motions rolling in our bowels, that out of them may arise a happy Universe, which else would in their contracts destroy each other, and expose all to flames; yet this goodness is to be feared, that we may continue in it. For no Nation is the root that bears mercy; it will
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be mercy though we perish : But it is mercy bears up all humane condition , which hangs like a ball in the air , supported by infinite kindness.

It is the great miracle we are preserved, not that we are in distress, being so apt to danger, that we are crushed before the moth ; so worthless , that we perish by multitudes without any regarding it : Lastly , so guilty , that all Creatures in Heaven and Earth give their applause to divine Judgments upon us ; which are unwilling to proceed, till the stone cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber answer it ; that is, till the most insensible things are ready to joyn with, and even provoke them up.

If then mercy carries all our happiness, what reason have we to reverence it ?

Nor is mercy less wise and holy , of smaller counsel and intention, then Judgment. In God it is not a softness of Nature, or indulgence to sin ; it is not resembled by the tenderness of a weak, but of a severe and wise man : and therefore is not to be trifled with.

It is true indeed, the womb of mercy

is infinitely pregnant ; if it were not hindered by our sins, it would be to thousands ; if it made up its circle, and were not interrupted in its course, it would be from everlasting to everlasting : but then the hearts of men must be suppled, and oyl'd, sweetned, and purified by it ; the reasons of it must be pursued, that it may not be abused : for it delivers at last into the hand of vengeance, when it is neglected and disobeyed ; it accomplishes dreadful ends upon those that despise it, giving them opportunity to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath ; and those that hate its counsels, are repaid even to the third and fourth Generation, in the days wherein the righteous Judgments of God reveal themselves.

Seeing then that the ends of all Gods disposes are, that the world may partake his Holiness ; if he uses the soft arguments of favour towards us after those of displeasure, is it not a sin of the greatest aggravation to contemn the riches of his goodness ? For it either argues this kind of Atheism, that men take all the good they receive for the
course

course of Nature, and kinder conspiration of contingencies, and so regard not the work of Gods hand ; and these God destroys, and will not build up : or else, which is a greater Atheism, it is, as if we should say , we are delivered to do all these abominations.

To sin against mercy , shews an exceeding obduracy of men in sin, that nothing will take them off ; for mercy is the proper argument (the cords) of a man ; he kicks against bowels that offends it ; it shews the greatest sensuality, that men turn all that way , as the *Israelites* gave those good things to their Idols, which they received from God. In such a case nothing remains, but that God vindicate himself by Judgments.

These things I have subjoyned concerning mercy to a Discourse of Judgments, with a prospect upon the hopes of a more prosperous condition , and in meditation of that of *Ezra*, After all this is come upon us for our evil deeds and great trespasses : Seeing that thou, O our God , hast punished us less then our iniquities deserve, and given us a breath-

breathing, should we go on to break thy Commandements, and to continue our strict alliances with former abominations? Wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us? So that there should be no remnant, or escaping.

But alas! seeing one sinner destroys much good, and we see them with their sins by multitudes thronging into the broad light, while in publick appearance we have very little of the preservations against Judgments, or the usual reasons of their suspensions, how can we but fear our clouds should return after the rain, till we are punished to seven times more?

Yet because there are better hopes, though retired into the secret closets and corners, we may not despair a preservation from utter ruine through that Mystery of Providence, to be observed in the Government of the world; whereby God without that desolation, by which States are dashed in pieces like a Potters vessel, redeems their converts with the Righteousness and Judgment he executes, purges away their dross
and

and Tin by the spirit of burning, exciting the fire to a just intention to such an end, purifies them seven times in the seven-fold punishment; and then re-instates them in Glory; and over that Glory creates a defence.

Let us now hear the conclusion of the whole matter, which is, That God hath not only a time to judge every work of every single person, but he hath appointed seasons now to judge whole Nations, not so properly capable of that future Judgment. This falls out at certain periods ordained by him, according to the strict measure of time (even to half an hour) which doth not only bring forth Events designed to it, but even exacts, and calls for them.

It is then the whole Duty and Interest of Nations to ~~fear~~ before him, to keep his Commandements, and advance his Glory and Truth, by not contending with, but obeying it.

This conclusion is so indented with the mind, that it more closely twines with it, then that circuit of reason used to demonstrate it, and more speedily rises up out of the confession of the Soul,

Soul; then those Engines that are fit to raise it can be applied. So that of making many Books or long Discourses there is no end: Yet because the mind resting upon its own conclusion, and enlarging also upon the whole circle of truth about it, stands both better to view, and with more benefit collects practical inference from it; it is good to take the advantage of what may be subservient hereunto.

~~According to the first measure of time (even to half an hour) which doth not only bring forth Events designed to it, but exercises and calls for them.~~

~~It is then the whole Day and late-
tell of his duty before him, to
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vance his Glory and Truth, by not con-
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